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# SKETCHES OF

# RULERS OF INDIA

## VOL. II

## THE COMPANY'S GOVERNORS

CLIVE · HASTINGS · MUNRO · MALCOLM
ELPHINSTONE · METCALFE
THOMASON · COLVIN

BY

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# INTRODUCTION

In that memorable Apologia for his seven years' administration of India which the late Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, delivered at a farewell banquet given in his honour at Bombay on the eve of his embarkation for England, occurs this noble utterance: 'A hundred times have I said to myself that to every Englishman in this country as he ends his work might be truthfully applied the phrase: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." No man has, I believe, ever served India faithfully of whom that could not be said. All other triumphs are tinsel and sham. Perhaps there are few of us who make anything but a poor approximation to that ideal. But let it be our ideal all the same, to fight for the right, to abhor the imperfect, the unjust, or the mean, to swerve neither to the right hand nor to the left, to care nothing for flattery, or applause, or odium, or abuse—it is so easy to have any of them in India—never to let your enthusiasm be soured, or your courage grow dim, but to remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of His ploughs, in whose furrow the Nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice, or happiness, or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, the dawn of intellectual enlightenment, or a stirring of duty where it did not before exist. That is enough. That is the Englishman's justification in India. It is good enough for his watchword while he is here, for his epitaph when he is gone. I have worked for

no other aim. Let India be my judge.' As one who has himself felt the impress of a great personality, and the stimulus of an ardent enthusiasm, I only voice the opinion of those conversant with the work that the author of these words accomplished in India, when I say that, so far as he himself is concerned, they convey the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And as they are true of him, so will they be found to be equally true of all those servants of the Empire who have possessed the same inspiring energy, the same high ideals, and the same enduring enthusiasm, and of none will they be found to be more true than of those men whose lives and characters are briefly portrayed in the following pages.

The period covered by the careers of these eight early administrators is one of the most remarkable and the most interesting periods of the history of the British connexion with India. It extends over exactly one hundred years, from the laying of the first foundations of British supremacy in one remote corner of the Indian Continent, onwards throughout its gradual expansion, till it spread practically over the whole country, and down to the determined attempt that was made at the end of that period to overthrow it.

The special interest of these biographical studies will be found to be in the fact that the men therein portrayed were some of the principal actors in the great scenes that were enacted during the progress of the great drama. Though they were all in the position of public servants, the two first in the series, Clive and Warren Hastings, being the most faithful servants of the Company, and the others the agents of the Company's representatives, the remarkable feature about them all was that they were no mere puppets controlled by wire-pullers, but were all conspicuous for an independence of character which enabled them, not once or twice only, but on many occasions, to take the initiative, when the great interests

entrusted to them seemed to demand that such initiative should be taken: and they were usually able to command the assent of their chiefs; and even where that assent was not forthcoming, 'Time, the great wonder-worker,' more often than not confirmed the wisdom of their action, so that, when, as not unfrequently happened, orders arrived disallowing particular action, they could often point triumphantly to the accomplished fact. But their thus taking the initiative into their own hands did not by any means imply a spirit of insubordination: they never deliberately set up their own judgement as superior to that of their chiefs. On the contrary, there were occasions when, even though they may not have approved of the particular policy enjoined on them, they loyally co-operated in carrying it out. Thus they proved their possession of the most valuable qualities that public servants can possess, initiative combined with a proper sense of duty and responsibility to their chiefs.

These men represented both the Civil and Military Services, and another remarkable feature about them was that they one and all rose from the lowest grades of those services to the highest office they could command. They all rose to be Governors of Provinces: and two indeed to the rank, in one case substantive, in another provisional and acting, of Governor-General; and this without patronage and without undue favouritism. Sir John Kaye has remarked of those officers whose lives he has recorded in his most interesting and instructive work, *Lives of Indian Officers*: 'Self-reliance and self-help made them what they were. The nepotism of the Court of Directors did not pass beyond the portico of the India House. In India every man had a fair start and an open course. The son of the Chairman had no better chance than the son of the Scotch farmer or the Irish squire.' These words are especially true of the men who are dealt with in these pages.

A seventeenth-century poet has thus described his outlook on life :—

> Lord of myself, accountable to none,
> But to my Conscience, and my God alone.

This was the principle that practically animated the lives of these distinguished men. Among their most marked characteristics was their calm confidence in their own uprightness and righteousness : it was this that carried them through unparalleled difficulties and dangers, aye, and temptations too, that assailed them, or at any rate the great majority of them, in the course of their careers. Chief among the temptations that beset them was the bribery and corruption that formed the very atmosphere of the world they lived in. That they resisted this, and made themselves masters of circumstance rather than its slaves, forms one of their highest claims to distinction. A story, as told by Sir John Kaye, in his *Life of Lord Metcalfe*, may be given here to illustrate the character of the temptations high officials in India were constantly exposed to at this period of Indian history. A wealthy native had made a certain proposal to Government, and, in order 'to stimulate it', he offered the Chief Secretary a sum of 30,000 rupees. The man was indignantly dismissed. For some time after this he was observed to be considerably depressed in spirit, and was continually reproaching himself. 'Fool that I was,' he repeated, 'to offer a gentleman of his rank only 30,000 rupees ; I should have offered three lakhs, and then I should have got what I wanted.' This feeling, that a gift has only to be large enough for it to be accepted, still exists in India, only it has been transferred from the region of bribes to that of fees. An illustration of this may be given. The Government of India has recently ruled that a medical man, when called in by an Indian nobleman, is not to accept more than a certain prescribed amount without obtaining the

consent of the Government. A medical man had been attending a Feudatory chief; when his services were no longer needed, he was presented with a very handsome fee. This happened to be more than the amount prescribed; it was returned with a polite message that it could not be accepted without the consent of the Government. The chief was a bit puzzled, and he remarked to his Diwan: 'What does the Sahib want? Send him a bigger fee!' It will stand to the eternal credit of Clive that he was the earliest administrator to put a stop to the practice common amongst the Company's servants of taking presents from the people. It is a striking testimony to the character for purity and integrity that British officers in India, under the initiative of such men as Clive and Warren Hastings, gradually built up for themselves, that, finding the higher British officials absolutely incorruptible, the princes and chiefs and noblemen of India, who were anxious to know how matters affecting their interests, which were before Government, were progressing, and who were too impatient to wait for the actual orders passed on them by Government, should have established their own agencies at the head quarters of Government, and should have paid sums amounting to several thousand rupees to their agents for any early information they could buy in the Secretariat. The fortunes of one well-known family in Bengal were entirely built up from such an agency. Nor were these men exceptions in their display of these high qualities of uprightness and integrity. It is recorded of that brave old soldier, Sir David Ochterlony, that when he discovered that a certain native, to whom he had sold a mansion he had himself recently bought from Sir Charles Metcalfe at Delhi, was boasting of having rendered him a service in thus taking it off his hands, he promptly cancelled the bargain and bought it back again. Naturally, some of the more gracious courtesies of Oriental life and manners have been lost to Englishmen by the orders that they are

not to accept presents, and so place themselves under an obligation to the people of the country. It has always been customary with the great houses of India ‘ to welcome the coming and speed the departing guest ’ in a peculiarly graceful manner. The would-be host first sends a preliminary invitation to one he wishes to honour by entertaining him as his guest; when he has ascertained that a visit would be acceptable, he takes his Guru, the family spiritual adviser, into consultation, in order to ascertain what day will be auspicious for a visit from his guest. The Guru consults his tablets, and an auspicious day and hour for the guest's arrival is fixed. A special messenger, who is generally the family news-writer, is then dispatched, bearing with him a beautifully engrossed Sanskrit couplet, if it is a Hindu friend who is being thus invited, which announces the auspicious day. The guest duly arrives, and is presented on arrival with articles conducive to his comfort during his stay; on taking his departure, he is presented with a gift of money to recoup him for the expenses of his journey, and sets of handsomely embroidered silks and brocades. At the same time, though such presents are not allowable for Englishmen to accept on the occasions of their visits to their Indian friends, a pleasant exchange of courtesies is still possible between an Indian host and his English guest; and this takes the simple form of an exchange of portraits. A portrait-gallery of some dimensions could possibly be filled from the collections that grace the walls of many an Indian nobleman's halls, of the portraits of distinguished English visitors with whom their hosts have thus exchanged portraits. It is interesting to note in this connexion that after the death of the great Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh, ruler of the Punjab, a portrait of Metcalfe was found among his most treasured possessions in the State treasury, with an inscription on the back marking the esteem of its owner for the original of the portrait.

'Another prominent characteristic of these early administrators was their exceeding versatility. What Sir John Kaye has noted of the versatility of Malcolm especially is almost equally applicable to all: 'I do not know an example out of the regions of Romance in which so many remarkable qualities, generally supposed to be antagonistic, were combined in the same person. It is no small thing to cope with a tiger in the jungles: it is no small thing to draw up an elaborate State paper: it is no small thing to write the history of a nation: it is no small thing to conduct to a successful issue a difficult negotiation at a foreign court: it is no small thing to lead an army to victory: and I think it may with truth be said that he who could do all these things with such brilliant success as Sir John Malcolm, was a very remarkable man in a remarkable age.' In the court, or the camp, or the cottage, they were all equally at home. What the Asiatic and Indian potentates seem to have felt most about them was the dominating power of a superior will. Almost at his first contact with Clive, the will-power of the Nawab Suraj-ud-Daulah seems to have collapsed. Hastings, though he never came into direct personal touch with the great Mahratta chieftain, the Maharaja Madhav Rao Scindia, was recognized by him as a man whose will was not to be thwarted. Of the two envoys who were at the Court of Persia at the same time, 'Baghdad Jones' and Malcolm, it was the towering personality of Malcolm alone that impressed the imagination of the Shah. And, but only after a long trial of strength, the will of the great Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh, eventually succumbed before the more patient but more masterful will of Metcalfe. One of the most amusing dispatches ever recorded in history is that which Ranjit Singh addressed to Metcalfe after receiving an ultimatum in connexion with some demands which Ranjit had been slow to comply with, and upon which hung the issues of peace or war. It reads

almost like an extract from *Alice in Wonderland.* 'When matters are settled,' the Maharaja plaintively complained, 'in a friendly and amicable way, to talk of armies and such things is neither necessary nor pleasing to my friendly disposition.'

And not only was it the sovereigns of Asiatic States, and the princes of India, that thus felt the influence of these remarkable men; but Native statesmen also found that, with all their capacity for intrigue, they were no match for the straightforwardness and transparent simplicity of the Englishmen they were pitted against. One of the most notable of these was a Mahratta Brahman, one Vithal Panth by name, Prime Minister at the Court of Scindia, when Sir Arthur Wellesley was negotiating a treaty. Malcolm, who was assisting Wellesley, had noted this man's impenetrable countenance, and had remarked that he never saw a man with such a face for the game of 'brag'. He was henceforth known as 'Old Brag'. Sir Arthur Wellesley had also noted the man; and years afterwards, when he had become Duke of Wellington, Malcolm and he were discussing Talleyrand: 'He is a good deal like "Old Brag",' remarked the Duke, 'but not so clever.' But not all of the Native officials with whom high English officials in these early days came in contact were men of intriguing and untrustworthy character by any means. There were men of the very highest character amongst them. No greater contrast, indeed, was it possible to find than that between the arch-hypocrite Amin Chand, with whom Clive had the misfortune to come in touch, and the high-minded Diwan of the Mysore Court, Purniah, whom Malcolm had the good fortune to have for a time as his colleague, and of whom he remarked that 'he had found in the Diwan, Purniah, a Native statesman, equally honest and able, bent upon co-operating to the utmost with high-minded English officials'. It was the character of this Native statesman that led Malcolm to

describe the administration of the Mysore State under the joint rule of Englishmen and Indians as 'the best model of this description of Asiatic connexion. Fortunate alike in its European and Native administrators, the country was flourishing to our hearts' content.'

If it was this transparent sincerity and straightforwardness that gave these men such influence in the court and among princes; it was the same qualities that rendered their influence so great in the cottage and among the peasants of the country districts. A good story is told of Malcolm's methods of dealing with the Bhils, one of the aboriginal races of India. It may be told in Sir John Kaye's own words: 'A Bhil, one of the wildest of a wild tribe, broke clamorously into his tent one day, threw himself at Malcolm's feet, and cried aloud for justice. He had a dreadful story to tell of robbery and murder, and prayed that justice might be executed upon the criminal. "Hold, hold," said Malcolm, "not so fast; the party you accuse shall be sent for and the cause inquired into forthwith." "What is the use of inquiring?" asked the Bhil; "my cattle have been carried off, and one of my sons killed in an attempt to recover them." "It may be so," returned Malcolm, "but still I must inquire. Do you know why the Almighty gave me two ears?" The Bhil looked puzzled, shook his head, and answered in the negative. "Then I will tell you," said Malcolm: "in order that I may hear your story with one, and the other party's with the other."' The assembled Bhils, it is recorded, loudly applauded this remark. It was such qualities that brought out all that was best in Native character: 'Soul,' it has been finely said, 'responded to soul.' A well-known Oriental salutation given to the accompaniment of a hearty embrace, is Dil-ba-Dil, heart to heart. In the case of these men all who came in contact with them knew that it was a salutation that had a real significance, and was no mere empty phrase. Sir John Kaye has remarked of

them that 'they were ever quick to acknowledge all that was really good and beautiful in the Native character, and wise and beneficial in Native rule, and to dwell upon it with genuine ardour and enthusiasm'. A recent reviewer of Earl Cromer's book, *Modern Egypt*, has written: 'Lord Cromer confesses that after nearly fifty years spent in the East, he cannot bridge the gap between the Oriental and the Western habits of mind and different outlooks upon life. Sympathy perhaps is possible, and mutual esteem, but not genuine understanding.' However true this may be of the great majority of those who spend their lives in the East, it is certain that these early administrators came as near to a complete comprehension of the people amongst whom they spent their lives, and as near to being completely comprehended by them, as any men are ever likely to come; and the secret of it lies largely in their naturalness. They were ever themselves; this drew out a corresponding naturalness from the people.

But it was not only those qualities that were Nature's gifts to them that gave these men this power: it was their accomplishments also, which had come to them only as the result of hard and strenuous labour. Their accurate acquaintance, for instance, with the languages spoken by the people was of material assistance to them throughout their careers. They were most of them masters not only of the courtly Persian, the language of the courts of Princes, but also of the common vernaculars, the language of the camp and the cottage, and people heard them speaking in their own tongues in which they were born. The only one amongst them of whom History has not recorded an intimate acquaintance with any vernacular, is Clive; but even in his case, the fact that he assumed the disguise of a native when making his escape from Madras at the time of its capture by the French, seems to point to his having some speaking acquaintance with some vernacular at any rate. It does not need residence in an Eastern

country to appreciate the power given by the command of its vernaculars. Politically, this knowledge was of the greatest service to early Indian administrators: it enabled them to see behind the scenes, and to acquaint themselves with what was passing in men's minds at most critical periods of British Indian history. They were enabled to have, as it is recorded of Elphinstone that he had, their own secret service of intelligencers: and, without meeting deceit with deceit or intrigue with intrigue, they were often thus in a position, by making a counter-move at the right moment, to checkmate effectually the plans of those who were intriguing in secret against the British power.

But this was only one, and that not by any means the most important, of the uses to which these men put their knowledge of the languages of the country. Sir John Kaye has said of Malcolm: 'If he did not find "sermons in stones", or "tongues in trees", he found in every man he met a teacher.' And what was true of Malcolm was equally true of the great majority of these men. They were always learning and ever striving to get to know well the people they lived amongst, and to get these people to know them well, and to recognize in them the embodiment of a kindly and beneficent rule. That the people did in very many cases recognize this, may be illustrated from an incident that has been recorded in connexion with Sir Thomas Munro. Malcolm was once journeying through one of the Provinces that were at the time being administered by Munro on behalf of the Company. He asked a native of that part of the country what province he was passing through, and to his delight he received, not as he might very well have expected, and as in these days he would have got, the answer, Sirkar-Ka-Mulk, 'the country of the Government,' but Munro-Ka-Mulk, 'Munro's country.' And as he went along he found 'Tom Munro's name in the mouth of all as a father and protector'. Walks and talks, indeed, with the people of the country formed

a conspicuous feature of the system of these men, and accounted for much of the success they achieved in their administration : it certainly added an element of romance to their lives, which is wanting to-day. They never, moreover, if they could help it, did by writing what they could do by talking. This knowledge of the vernaculars had the further advantage, more especially in their intercourse with the great landed proprietors, that they needed not the agency of interpreters, or of that individual, so significantly styled in Persian, Aqil-saz, Sense-provider for the great man, a functionary who to this day exists in the person of the Mukhtar, or chief agent, who so often stands behind his master's chair at important interviews to prompt him. With the gradual spread of education, however, among the landed classes, his services are not quite so much in demand as once they were. That in these early days the services of such a functionary were of some utility, may be illustrated from an incident that took place at the court of the Nizam, which is related by Sir John Malcolm : 'The princes of the East,' he wrote to a friend, 'do not lose much of their valuable time in the study of geography. Recently the Resident wanted a grant of a few fields to build the Residency upon. He had a survey made and a plan was drawn on a large sheet, and was duly shown by him to the Nizam, and the Nizam was requested to make a grant of the ground. The Prince, after gravely studying the plan, said he was sorry he could not comply with the request. The Resident was retiring somewhat disconcerted at this refusal; but the Nizam's Minister said to him, with a smile, "Do not be annoyed, you frightened the Nizam with the size of the plan you showed him. Your fields were almost as large as any of the maps of his kingdom he has as yet seen. No wonder," said the Minister, laughing, "he did not like to make such a cession. Make a survey upon a reduced scale, and the difficulty will vanish." The Resident could hardly believe

this would be the case. But when at his next interview he presented the same plan upon a small card, the ready and cheerful assent of the Prince satisfied him that the Minister had been quite correct in his guess at the cause of his former failure.' Such an incident would be practically impossible in these days of enlightenment. Land surveying now forms a very useful part of the curriculum at the schools where the scions of aristocracy are now trained. On the occasion of a ceremonial visit made by the late Viceroy of India to the Gwalior State, the Maharaja, who was at the time a minor, produced for the Viceroy's inspection a very excellent survey map of a portion of his dominions prepared by his own hand.

It may be said that in the present day, with the almost universal use of English among the educated classes of the country, there is less need of an acquaintance with the vernaculars for English officials than there was. But apart from the obvious advantages attached to an intimate acquaintance with the vernaculars of any country, not the least of which is that sympathy with one's environment which adds materially to one's peace of mind and contentment when living in an adopted country, there is one great use it can still be put to in India, which has, as a general rule, been overlooked. There exists in India a vast world behind a veil, which is by no means that veil of ignorance and prejudice which it has often been represented as being. It is the world of the mothers and wives, the sisters and daughters of the men with whom the Englishman is daily brought into contact in the ordinary pursuits of his vocation. Unseen by, and unknown to, the average Englishman, it wields an influence on the destinies of the race which is none the less potent because wielded with a silence that is unknown to the shrieking sisterhood of suffragists in the West. Nowhere more than in India is the old saying true that 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. Historians have not often

attempted to tear aside the veil behind which the women of India 'live and move and have their being'; but when they have done so, it has been to reveal acts of heroic courage or heroic constancy. The women of India need counsel and sympathy quite as much as the men. As one whose duties as guide, philosopher, and friend to many a young prince and landholder, have often brought him into contact with this world, and who has been privileged to give counsel and advice, both by correspondence and by word of mouth, I can vouch for the value the women of India attach to such an expression of sympathy. For some years I had the privilege of living in the immediate neighbourhood of a great Indian lady, one of the noblest specimens of Indian womanhood, the late Maharani Subarnamayi, who has been styled the Baroness Burdett-Coutts of India. She was a woman of great shrewdness of character, and of great business capacity, unacquainted with English; and one of her most trusted advisers was the medical officer of the district, a man who had an unusual command of the vernacular. An anecdote will illustrate her shrewdness. A young student, who was a Brahman by caste, was anxious to obtain some financial assistance from her to enable him to prosecute his studies at the University. He wrote to her, and, thinking to propitiate her by adroit flattery, mentioned in his letter that he had dreamt that she had been his mother in a previous state of existence. On receipt of the letter she simply remarked to her Diwan, 'Then I must have done something very wicked in a previous state of existence to be only a Teli by caste in this.' The Government of India has recognized this need of Indian ladies for sympathy and aid in the management of their affairs: and in one Province at least a lady adviser has been appointed for this very purpose. But it is to the Magistrate of the District that the women of India still look as their natural adviser in times of difficulty; and who can gauge the

extent of the influence such men can have if they are known to possess that command of the language which will enable them to give counsel and advice directly, and without the intervention of intermediaries to those who may chance to seek it from them?

Chief, perhaps, among the qualities that distinguished these administrators of an earlier day was their enthusiasm, a quality which of itself gave their full value to all the other characteristics which they possessed. A celebrated Anglo-Indian administrator, who is also a distinguished man of letters, has been credited with saying: 'There are three decades in every Englishman's career in India; the first is one of enthusiasm, the second one of disgust, and the third one of indifference.' That this saying contains a grain of truth no one who has lived long in India can deny; but given the proper spirit, and given a certain share of practical common sense, and, above all, the possession of the saving grace of humour, there is no reason why a man should not retain the enthusiasm with which he sets out to the end of his service; indeed, if he cannot retain at least some share of interest in his work, he has no business to continue in the public service. With the particular men in question, all of whom had entered upon their third decade of public service, and some of whom even passed beyond it, before leaving the scene of their labours, or being prematurely removed by death, their enthusiasm was 'as a burning fire shut up in their bones'. They had of course, many advantages that modern administrators do not possess. One advantage, at least, they had which materially helps a man to retain his freshness of interest in his work: though, during a goodly portion of their careers, they were men under orders, they were allowed to carry out their orders in their own way without any unnecessary interference; they had, too, for the most part, that which an Englishman's genius knows so well how to take advantage of, a free hand. This gave them full scope

for originality and initiative; thus they were able to maintain that sustained earnestness in their work that was one, if not the main, secret of the success of that work. It is possible that one outcome of the recently appointed Decentralization Commission, may be the granting of greater powers of initiative to the District Officers of the present day; for it is undoubtedly true of the great majority of the modern administrators that they only require the opportunities which their great predecessors had so abundantly, to meet with an almost equal proportion of success. They have great difficulties to contend against, and difficulties in the main of a different order from those that confronted their predecessors; but they possess the same steadfast earnestness, which should help them to overcome them.

Another point that is worth noting in connexion with the careers of these early administrators, is the fact that there is hardly a problem that has exercised the minds of later generations of Indian administrators that did not present itself in some form or other to them also. And one remarkable feature in connexion therewith, is the contrast presented between the absolute certainty and conviction that they were right with which they approached these and attempted their solution, and the shrinking fears of possible eventualities which might prove a menace to the State, with which they were approached by others. Chief among these problems were those that concerned the subject of Education, and the larger employment of Indians in the public service that that question involved; the liberty of the Press, which also necessarily followed from the further enlightenment that resulted from its forces; and the political problems of government, which are ever present to the minds of the rulers of India.

The educational problem originally presented itself in connexion with the necessities of the public service. To Warren Hastings is due the credit of having inaugurated

that system of native agency under European control that forms the keynote of the British administration of India. And that his measures in this direction met with some proportion of success is evident from the address which was sent him by the people of the Benares State after his retirement to his native country, in which these words occur : 'By appointing the most distinguished of Brahmans and Muhammadans to preside over their affairs, you have rendered the inhabitants much happier than they were during the administration of Chait Singh.' Hastings was the first to pay some attention to the education of the youth of India with a view to their employment as public servants. At a time when Persian formed the language of the courts, and was the chief medium in which the business of Government was conducted, the education of Muhammadan youth perhaps was considered of chief importance. When it was afterwards decided that English should form the medium of higher education, and when English gradually took the place of Persian as the medium for the transaction of public business, then the education of Hindu youth came more to the front. And this for a reason that had not been foreseen by the administrators who were responsible for the change, chief among whom was Lord William Bentinck, whom for a time Metcalfe served under, and eventually succeeded in an acting capacity. The Muhammadans, finding that no provision had been made for religious instruction under the new system, practically declined to avail themselves of the facilities afforded. The Hindus, on the other hand, gladly took advantage of them; they saw new careers opening out for their sons, and new chances of service under Government; and they crowded into the schools and colleges which were gradually established throughout the country, and where, in accordance with that policy of religious neutrality which is the only possible one to be observed by rulers whose faith is not the faith of the ruled, a secular

education only was to be had. That the Hindus did do so, however, was not necessarily due to indifference about religious instruction ; they trusted to the religious atmosphere of their homes, and did not realize its importance in the school. But when, as Western Science gradually undermined, as it was bound to do in process of time, many of their sons' ancient religious beliefs, then, and then only, did they begin to realize the mistake they had made. Many steps have been taken by them in recent years to retrieve their mistake, and in not a few schools now definite instruction in the faith of their fathers is being given to Hindu boys. And no more interesting or significant development has been seen in the present generation, than that deputation of prominent Hindu noblemen and gentlemen who so recently approached the present Viceroy, Lord Minto, to ask for facilities to be given for definite religious instruction being introduced in all schools and colleges throughout the land, where Hindus are being educated. The Muhammadans have never failed to realize the importance in the school, as well as in the home, of definite religious instruction. After having held out for a long time, they began to find their sons being worsted in the competition for public office, and falling back in the race of life owing to the want of the educational facilities which the Hindus were enjoying. And they began to bestir themselves in the matter. It will ever stand to the credit of that great Muhammadan philanthropist, Sir Syed Ahmad Ali, that he recognized the needs of his co-religionists, and made a noble effort to meet them. By founding the great school and college of Aligarh, he very largely succeeded in doing so. After an existence of practically thirty years, this great institution has fully justified its foundation, and sends forth into the arena of public life men who, while equipped with all the learning of the West, have at the same time not lost their faith, nor with it that sense of duty and responsibility,

and at the same time reverence for high ideals, which so often go by the board when once faith has suffered shipwreck. As time went on, a further development of education took place. One of the most distinguished of these early administrators, Thomason, was the first to inaugurate a general scheme of education for the masses of the population. This was combined with a statesman-like scheme for their technical instruction. Had this scheme, which had for its object the linking up of small technical schools throughout his own Province with one great central institution at head quarters, been carried out in its entirety, not only in his own Province, but throughout the length and breadth of British India, one step in advance might have been taken towards a solution of one problem, at least, that has taxed, and will continue for many generations to tax, the brains of Indian administrators—how best to find new outlets for the employment of a people whose principal occupation now keeps them on the land; how to divert the energies of Indian peasants from agriculture alone to more profitable sources of employment. If the cry is now heard in England, 'Back to the land,' its converse will for long be heard in India, but in a modified form, 'Away from the land.' The final development of the system of education came while Colvin, the last of these early administrators, held office, in the Dispatch of 1854, which placed the coping-stone on the edifice of higher education by the establishment of Universities.

Metcalfe has been styled 'the liberator of the Indian Press', and rightly so, for to him was due that great measure that practically removed for ever the shackles that the law had placed on freedom of speech, and freedom of the expression of opinion in the columns of the newspaper. His emancipation of the Press will ever form an epoch in the history of British rule in India. Henceforth, as he wrote in his famous Apologia, written on the eve of his bidding farewell to India, there was to be one law

only in force, 'a law of liberty, and responsibility to Courts of Justice.' This is the view that has practically prevailed in these later days. Metcalfe himself was absolutely convinced both of the righteousness of his measure and of its political expediency; but there were not wanting many, and among these some of his own chiefs of the India Board, who held the contrary opinion. Elphinstone was another great statesman who held that in the printing-press was to be found one of the best means for the enlightenment of the people, and the consequent amelioration of their lot. But many men, and men in high position also, saw in such things only a danger to the State. An amusing anecdote in illustration of this feeling has been recorded: 'The Resident at the court of the Nizam, who had expressed a wish to see some of the appliances of European science, had sent him an air-pump, a printing-press, and a model of a man-of-war. He was censured in a letter from the Chief Secretary to Government for having placed in the hands of a Native prince so dangerous an instrument as a printing-press. Upon this the Resident wrote back that the Government need be under no apprehension, for the Nizam had taken so little interest in the press, that he had not even made a present to the compositors who had come round from Madras to exhibit its working. But he added that if Government still felt any uneasiness about the presence of this dangerous instrument of civilization at the court of the Nizam, he could easily obtain admission to the Tosha-Khana, the State treasure-room, and there so cripple the press as to ensure its never being in a fit state to do duty again.'

Many of these early administrators foresaw the time when, as education and the resulting enlightenment spread among the people, there would come a desire for a greater share in the administration, and for some measure of self-government in many departments affecting their own local and provincial interests; but they saw no reason

herein for Government staying its hand in the beneficent work of the enlightenment of the peoples of India. To those, on the one hand, who see in the modern systems of education the causes of much of the unrest that has been so much discussed in recent days, a perusal of the noble words of Sir John Malcolm may be commended: 'In contemplating the probable future destiny of our extraordinary Empire in Asia, it is impossible not to think but that the knowledge we are so actively introducing may, in the course of time, cause great changes; but how these may affect our power is a question that the wisest of us will find it difficult to answer. I must ever think that to impart knowledge is to impart strength to a community, and that, as that becomes enlightened, the love of independence, combined with a natural pride in self-government, which God appears to have infused into the spirit of man and of nations, will be too strong for all the lessons of duty, of meekness, and of gratitude to their intellectual benefactors, that we can teach our Indian subjects; but I am not deterred by the possibility (nor should I be by the probability) of such consequences from being the advocate for their instruction in all the arts of civil life.'

And to those, on the other hand, who would see in the political constitution of Canada a model for the future government of India, a careful perusal may be commended of the noble Minute which Lord Metcalfe, when holding the office of Governor-General of Canada, addressed to the members of the Municipal Council of Gore, and of which it has been said that it is worthy of being written in letters of gold, on the full meaning of Responsible Government. It is too long to quote here: it will be found in Sir John Kaye's *Life of Lord Metcalfe.* Metcalfe seems to have had a prescience that some such desire for more extended representative institutions might arise in India in the not far distant future. Writing to an Indian friend at the time that he was engaged in a struggle with his Council,

a majority in which, supported by a majority in the Representative Assembly, were continually hampering and opposing him, he used these words: 'Fancy such a state of things in India, with a Muhammadan Council and a Muhammadan Assembly, and you will have some notion of my position.'

It has been left to the present generation of Indian administrators to see what were once only desires transformed into demands by at least one section of the population. The great political problem of the present day may be briefly summed up in the eloquent words with which the late Viceroy of India closed his memorable speech at the last Convocation of the University of Calcutta that he attended in his capacity as Chancellor: 'The task that now lies before the British rulers of India, and which will occupy them for many years to come, is how to adjust Race to Nationality, and Nationality to Empire; in other words, how to reconcile the conflicting interests of each race in India, be it Bengali, be it Madrasi, be it Mahratti, or be it Panjabi, with the interests of India as a whole, and to reconcile them all with the interests of the Empire. It can be done perhaps without detriment to race, or to nationality, and with safety to the empire, but the Indian peoples must play their part in the great achievement so that they may share in the results.' It is no part of the province of a layman to attempt solutions of political problems of government, neither should such find a place in writings that are mainly intended as character studies of great careers. They may well be left to those who have entered the arena of political strife, and who are now ranged in opposite camps.

Problems of a different character from these also engaged the attention of the early administrators. They, like their successors, had to contend with the scourge of Plague, Pestilence, and Famine. Plague, from having been at one time merely a migratory visitant to the shores of

India, seems now to have taken up its permanent abode. Those who had to deal with it in the early days of British administration met with much the same difficulties in combating it effectually that modern administrators have, and even Metcalfe was accused of riding roughshod over the feelings of the people in his efforts to stamp it out. It is fitting that the first Imperial Bacteriological Laboratory that has been established in India should have its location among the hills where this dreaded disease seems to have been more or less endemic, and where it was once so successfully combated by Thomason. Famine was another dreaded scourge that had to be met. It is recorded that Metcalfe's closing years in India were clouded by such a visitation in his Province. His biographer, writing almost contemporaneously with the event, was obliged pathetically to confess that 'a famine in India is an evil beyond the reach of human statesmanship to remedy or greatly to alleviate'. More than fifty years have passed since these words were penned. Modern administrators would not have to make such a confession of helplessness. The organization for dealing with famine is in these days almost as perfect as human ingenuity and human thought can make it. As one who has been privileged to assist the administration in its humane relief measures during the progress of the two great famines that have occurred in India within practically the last decade, I am in a position to vouch for the unremitting solicitude of the officers of Government, from the Viceroy downwards, in the great work. There may have been mistakes in the earlier famine, but they were mistakes due to ignorance of the most effective machinery, and not to indifference. And when the word went forth, as it did during the last great famine, that not a man, woman, or child was to be left to die of starvation, the command was most nobly responded to by all, and unparalleled efforts were made to translate it into fact. These great visitations, however

they are to be deplored, doubtless have their place in the scheme of things. Malcolm once laid down the dictum that ‘ the first great object of our rule in India is that we should be understood ’. And no doubt exists that it is at such crises that rulers and ruled are brought closer into contact than during many years of ordinary and uneventful administration. The great masses of the population, usually silent and unobtrusive, then voice their gratitude, and recognize their rulers, in their own expressive language, as ‘ Protectors of the poor ’.

It now remains to ask what are the lessons that may be learnt from the lives of these early administrators ? The great lesson they teach is that the same qualities that were necessary when the foundations of the great Indian Empire were being laid, are equally necessary for its maintenance, more especially at a time when insidious attempts are being made to sap those foundations. What those qualities were will be gathered from a perusal of the succeeding pages. To each and all of the men whose lives are there recorded, the words which Mr. Asquith, in terse and vivid language, used of the late Duke of Devonshire are equally applicable : ‘ He won that position by himself, by his single-minded devotion to duty. In our time there has been no more striking example of the service which can be rendered to the State by simplicity of nature, sincerity of conviction, directness of purpose, intuitive insight into practical conditions, inflexible courage, and, above all things, tranquil indifference to praise or blame.’

These Sketches are based mainly upon the original Series, entitled *Rulers of India*, which were edited by the late Sir W. W. Hunter on behalf of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, at Oxford. I have allowed myself some latitude in the delineation of Clive, but not, I think, without authority in the generous appreciation of the high-souled and magnanimous Malcolm. They have been specially

adapted by me, and put in a form and a language that should render them suitable either for lectures in schools and colleges, for which purpose their delivery will not take more than the ordinary school hour of fifty minutes, or for reading by the general public. The adaptations have been drawn from an experience of life and manners in India, which has been gained by the closest association with all classes of the people of India, in the court, the camp, and the cottage; but chiefly in educational work among the princes and nobles of the country. I have in contemplation a complete series of Character-Studies of the Rulers of India. In the first volume of the Series I have attempted to delineate in a manner worthy of the men those great rulers who were at the helm of the State during the critical times that preceded, accompanied, and followed the Indian Mutiny. In this volume I have dealt, also, I hope, in a manner worthy of them, with the men who bore the burden and heat of the day during the hundred years that witnessed the foundation and consolidation of British rule in India. In the succeeding volumes I propose to deal with the great struggles for supremacy between the Native Powers and the British Power that took place under a long line of distinguished Governors-General, and side by side with them I propose delineating some of the more distinguished among the Native rulers of India. In the final volume I hope to bring the history of the great Indian Dependency up to date by dealing, if I am so permitted, with the careers of the distinguished Viceroys who have ruled India so wisely and so well during the last fifty years. Thus a complete picture-gallery will be formed of all the great actors that have appeared on the Indian stage, and a complete outline will be presented of all the great scenes enacted in the drama there represented. This should prove attractive to all who live and move and have their being in the wide dominions of His Majesty Edward VII, King of England and Emperor of India, and

who are desirous of knowing what were the processes whereby what has been called ‘the brightest jewel’ in his Crown came into the possession of his great predecessors, rough-hewn and uncut; and the character of the men who have been entrusted with the responsible task of cutting and polishing it, so that now the lustre that shines forth from all its many facets glows with the radiance of a star of the first magnitude set in the Firmament of Empire.

The authors of the original works upon which this series of Sketches has been mainly based are :—

Colonel Malleson, author of *Lord Clive.*

Captain L. J. Trotter, author of *Warren Hastings.*

John Bradshaw, Esq., author of *Sir Thomas Munro.*

J. S. Cotton, Esq., author of *Mountstuart Elphinstone.*

Sir John Kaye, author of *The Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm,* edition 1856.

Sir John Kaye, author of *The Life of Lord Metcalfe,* edition 1854.

Sir Richard Temple, author of *James Thomason.*

Sir Auckland Colvin, author of *John Russell Colvin.*

The Delegates of the Clarendon Press, at Oxford, have courteously accorded me their permission to make use of the original volumes of their Series of *The Rulers of India* in preparing my Sketches.

To Lord Curzon, late Viceroy of India, and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, whose sustained enthusiasm in all that concerned the welfare of India shone with undimmed lustre, serving as a beacon to his generation throughout the seven long years of his Viceroyalty, this Series of Sketches of Rulers of India, by his gracious permission, is dedicated.

G. D. OSWELL.

*April,* 1908.

# CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION . . . . . . . . . . . . 3

CHAPTER I

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGLISH IN INDIA: LORD CLIVE, 1725–1774 . . . . . . . . . . 31

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDING OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION: WARREN HASTINGS, 1732–1818 . . . . . . . . 55

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY: SIR THOMAS MUNRO, 1761–1827 . . . . . . . 83

CHAPTER IV

THE SOLDIER, THE DIPLOMATIST, THE STATESMAN, THE ADMINISTRATOR: SIR JOHN MALCOLM, 1769–1833 . . . . 105

CHAPTER V

THE MAKING OF SOUTH-WESTERN INDIA: MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE, 1779–1859 . . . . . . . . 128

CHAPTER VI

THE LIBERATOR OF THE INDIAN PRESS: SIR CHARLES METCALFE, 1785–1846 . . . . . . . . . 153

CHAPTER VII

THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF NORTH-WESTERN INDIA: JAMES THOMASON, 1804–1853 . . . . . . . . 175

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES UNDER THE COMPANY: JOHN RUSSELL COLVIN, 1807–1857 . . . . . . . . . 195

# CHAPTER I

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGLISH IN INDIA

### Lord Clive, 1725–1774.

Napoleon once said of Wellington, 'Il paraît que c'est un homme, ce Wellesley,' 'This Wellesley seems to be a man.' And if there was one characteristic more than another that distinguished Clive, and which he had in common with the great Duke, it was manliness. Lord Curzon dwelt especially upon this trait in a speech he made at Merchant Taylors' School on the occasion of the unveiling of a mural tablet to the memory of one of the most distinguished alumni of that school. 'If anybody,' he said, 'is disposed to ask the question why in this hall, or in the larger world of England and of India, honour should be paid to the memory of Robert Clive, I think that the answer is very simple and clear. Clive was one of the master-spirits of the English race. He was one of those forces that seem to be put into the world to shape the destinies of mankind. Wherever history is read, wherever heroic deeds are sung, wherever the origin of that wonderful achievement, the Indian Empire, is traced, there the name of Robert Clive leaps at once to the front. You can no more get away from Clive than you can get away from the towering image of Julius Caesar, or the mighty personality of Napoleon. In one of the *Dramatic Idylls* of the poet, Robert Browning, whose verse was as rugged as the nature of Clive, and who was inspired by no less ardent a patriotism, there is a line which expresses what we all feel :—

In my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man.

That was the fact. Clive was a man and a master of men. From the time when he was a boy at school until in middle life he was standing up against his persecutors and revilers

in this country, with a noble courage that never quailed, all through, Clive was a man, raised above the level of his fellow creatures as one sometimes sees some great lighthouse of granite lifted above the scream and buffeting of the ocean.'

Robert Clive was born in Shropshire, and was the son of a country clergyman; thus he was only one of many others who have passed from the quiet of a country rectory into the stormy arena of public life, only to make for themselves a distinguished name in the annals of their country. Clive's school career was an index to much of his later career in India. He early showed his preference for a life of action to one of study. Schoolmasters, and, for that matter, parents also, are often mistaken in their estimate of a boy's character: they see a boy taking perhaps but little interest in his studies, and they label him good-for-nothing, and prophesy no smooth things of him when he becomes a man. But a boy, idle enough, it may be, in school, is often the life and soul of all games out of school. And schoolmasters will ever be the first to acknowledge that there is more hope of such a boy turning out well in his after life, than there is of a boy who shows but little interest either in work or play. It was a shrewd judge of schoolboy character who once remarked: 'England's great battles have been won in the playing-fields of Eton.' Clive was a boy of this type: he was a born leader of boys, as he afterwards was also of men. It stands to the credit of one schoolmaster out of the many Clive came in contact with during his school career, that he detected the latent capacity for great achievements in the boy. The head of his first school, Dr. Eaton, is said to have predicted that, 'if his scholar lived to be a man, and if opportunity enabled him to exert his talents, few names would be greater than his.' An interesting biographical note of Clive's early boyhood has been given by one who claims an ancestral connexion with him, Sir Steuart Colvin Bayley. In the course of an address on Clive that he delivered at the Society of Arts, at the inaugural meeting of the Session 1907–8, Sir Steuart Bayley remarked how Clive spent some seven or eight years of his childhood with Sir Steuart's great-grandfather, Mr. Bayley, and how

Mr. Bayley once had occasion to write of him when he was only seven: 'This fighting to which he is out of measure addicted, gives his temper such a fierceness and imperiousness that he flies out on every trifling occasion. For this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero in him, that I may help forward the more valuable qualities of meekness, benevolence, and patience.' Sir Steuart Bayley's humorous comment on this was: 'Fortunately perhaps for the world, if not for Clive, my revered ancestor achieved only very partial success.' And certainly few will feel disposed to quarrel with him on this count.

Clive's career was to be in India: and he received his first appointment as a writer in the East India Company's service at the age of eighteen, in the year 1743. He was posted to Madras. A voyage to India in those days was a much greater undertaking than it now is, as ships used to call at ports in South America and South Africa. It took Clive a year to reach his destination. The Company was then only a trading company, possessing no real territorial rights: and its agents, indeed, used to pay rent to Native Governments for the land they occupied. The office of a writer, therefore, was mere desk work in a commercial office, and was very different from that of an Indian civilian who in these days is the modern development of the writer. Work of this type could only have meant utter drudgery to a youth of Clive's temperament, and it was rendered worse as having to be carried on under an Indian sun, and amidst the discomforts of an Indian life, which had not the alleviations, comforts, or conveniences, that life in India can now boast of.

Many anecdotes have been told of this period of Clive's career: some perhaps embroidered by the imaginations of their authors, others strictly true. One of these stories goes that twice in one day he had tried to shoot himself, but that each time the pistol missed fire; and that when, on the pistol missing fire the second time, a friend accidentally came in to see him, Clive remarked: 'Then I am reserved for something great.'

He suffered from fits of depression, indeed, all through his life, and latterly from frequent attacks of pain from an internal disorder. On one occasion, Sir Steuart Bayley has

recorded, he had to be sent on a sea-voyage with an attendant to watch him. With a temperament and constitution such as his, it is not to be wondered at that he found the life of a clerk and the dull routine of an office alike unbearable. All his letters written home at this time tell the same tale: 'I have not,' he once wrote, 'enjoyed a happy day since I left my native country.' What he especially felt was his isolation. In one of his letters home he wrote: 'I am not acquainted with any one family in the place, and I have not assurance enough to invite myself without being asked.' A different etiquette in the matter of calling prevails in India from that which prevails in England. In India new-comers are privileged to call on the older residents of a place; but, unless a new-comer is provided with letters of introduction to some one at least in the place, this is a privilege that a young man, especially if he is not gifted with self-assurance, is diffident about availing himself of; needless to say, when he does, he has the right hand of fellowship extended to him in a most hearty manner. His one consolation seems to have been the kindness of the Governor of Madras, who did his best to make him more contented with his lot, and, in opening his valuable library to him, gave him an opportunity, which he was not slow to avail himself of, of supplying the deficiencies of his early education. How eventually he succeeded in doing so, may be estimated by the fact that he became renowned, not only for his mastery over the written word, as so many other distinguished men of action have become, but also for a mastery over the spoken word, that led the Earl of Chatham, himself no mean authority, to say of a speech he once heard Clive deliver in the House of Commons, that 'he had never heard a finer speech'. The perseverance and assiduity shown by so many of the young men who went out to India in the earlier days of John Company, in practically educating themselves after they had entered on an active career, is one of the most remarkable features of a remarkable period in the annals of the British in India. Munro, Malcolm, Elphinstone, and Metcalfe are all names that supply similar instances of this perseverance and assiduity.

War had broken out in Europe between France and England while Clive was still on his way to India. It had not at first affected the relations between the French and English representatives of their respective nations in their settlements in India. They had been content to exist side by side as peaceful traders without any idea of rivalry. They possessed no territorial rights, and accepted the suzerainty of the Native powers, chief among whom were the Subahdar of the Deccan, or, as he afterwards came to be styled, the Nizam of Haidarabad, and the Nawab of the Karnatik. Properly speaking, the latter potentate was but a feudatory of the former; but actually he was an independent prince: and the French regarded him as their sovereign overlord. Three years before Clive's appointment to the Company's service, a new Governor had been appointed over the French Settlements in the person of Dupleix: and he was destined to change the aspect of affairs altogether. Already, indeed, he had proved himself more far-seeing than the English; he had been steadily disciplining a body of Indian troops, had fortified his capital, Pondicheri, and had commenced even to intrigue in the affairs of the neighbouring Native princes, who were continually at war with each other. His plans, however, had not yet been matured. On the first outbreak of the war in Europe he had proposed to the English representative at Madras that the settlements should remain neutral; and he had even gone so far as to appeal to their mutual overlord, the Nawab of the Karnatik, to compel the English to agree to keep the peace. And for a time, indeed, peace was actually maintained. But events proved too strong for them. In the year 1846 a French Admiral, Labourdonnais, appeared off Madras. Dupleix sent his army to the assistance of the French Admiral: and the naval and military forces of the French combined succeeded in capturing Madras. Dupleix had seen his opportunity and had not failed to take it. He could not have known that this very success of his had given his opportunity to an obscure and almost unknown clerk in the English East India Company's service, who was to use it in destroying for ever his ambitious dreams of territorial dominion in India. Clive had been one of

those who had been taken prisoner, when the French occupied Madras : he had been released on parole : this had been given originally to Admiral Labourdonnais. But, when Dupleix had been ungenerous enough to parade the English Governor and other English officials before the natives of the country at Pondicheri, and had further required fresh parole to be given to a new Governor, Clive had felt himself no longer bound by the parole first given, and he escaped disguised as a native to Fort St. David. And who will deny that he was perfectly justified in so doing ?

Says Shakespeare :—

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

Such a tide had now arrived for Clive. The pen of the clerk was to be put aside for the sword of the soldier, and he now entered on that military career which ended in his being acclaimed by no less a statesman than William Pitt himself as ‘ a heaven-born general ’.

Clive first served as a volunteer, and in that capacity he assisted in repelling an attack of the French on Fort St. David. He very soon attracted the attention of a man who was to prove himself one of the ablest commanders of the day, Major Stringer Lawrence, who saw in him ‘ a high military spirit combined with decisive courage and high elevation of mind ’. He gave Clive a temporary commission, and put every facility in his way for further distinguishing himself. It was while he was holding this temporary commission that he distinguished himself under Admiral Boscawen, when that naval commander made his unsuccessful attack upon Pondicheri. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle brought the war in Europe between France and England to an end. Under this Treaty Madras was restored to its English masters, and Clive resumed for a time his civil employment. But he had made his mark as a soldier : and when a Native prince invited the co-operation of the English to enable him to recover Tanjore from the Mahrattas, promising them, in return for their assistance, the gift of an important place, Clive was allowed to accompany the force that was dispatched in response

to the invitation: and he again specially distinguished himself as one of a storming party. One historian has charged his conduct on this occasion as displaying a rashness approaching to folly, but the comment of the author of the article on Clive in *The Dictionary of National Biography* is saner and more to the point: 'If Clive—and the same may be said of other commanders in more recent times—had not carried daring to, and sometimes beyond, the verge of rashness, the conquest of India would never have been achieved. Had British Indian strategy been always governed by ordinary rules, neither Assaye nor Plassey would have been fought; nor would the strong position at the Peiwar Kotal have been taken by General Roberts with his small force of 3,000 men, in the last Afghan war.'

Hitherto, the English and French alike had been content to acquiesce in the suzerainty of the Native powers within whose territories their settlements were located. The decisive defeat, by a comparatively small force dispatched by Dupleix, of a very superior force of Native troops, who had been sent against Madras, when it was in French hands, to take possession of it on behalf of the Nawab of the Karnatik, who claimed it as the titular overlord of the French, had opened their eyes to the superiority of troops led and disciplined by European officers over any forces that could be sent against them by Native powers. And the Native powers, for their part, had also come to recognize this, and had begun to value the Europeans as allies. 'This revolution,' says the historian, 'had been effected by the genius of Dupleix.' Thus it came about that, though in Europe the French and English were at peace, in India they were practically in a state of war, as allies on opposite sides of rival Native powers in the Deccan and in the Karnatik.

Clive had at last succeeded in getting the official recognition of his superiors to his soldierly qualities: and in 1751 he received a permanent commission as captain. Governments are not slow to recognize the merits of their tried servants at the end of their careers, but they use very guarded language when giving appointments to more or less untried men at the commencement of their careers.

Clive, though a member of the Civil Service, was for the first time being officially recognized as a member of the Military Service of the Company, and the language used by the Court of Directors on appointing him such was sufficiently guarded: 'It is conceived that this officer may be of some service, and therefore we now order that a captaincy be given him.' He had already displayed the qualities that are always associated with a born soldier; he was now to show that he also possessed those of the born commander. In the course of the campaign that had now been definitely entered upon, the French and their allies had besieged Trichinopoli, where the British and their allies were shut up. Clive conceived the daring plan of attacking the enemy on their own ground, and of seizing Arcot, the capital of the Karnatik, as the best means of raising the siege. This daring plan at once established his military reputation: and for the first time he received an independent command, as the leader of the Expedition that was sent against Arcot in 1751.

It is impossible in this short sketch to give all the stirring incidents of this memorable campaign, but the capture and subsequent defence of Arcot stands out conspicuous. If, in the later annals of the British in India, the defence of the Residency at Lucknow has added a most glorious page, so, it must be acknowledged, did the defence of Arcot in the earlier annals; and not only on account of the tenacity and heroism displayed by the commander, but on account of the marvellous act of self-sacrifice that has been recorded of his Native soldiers. The historian has thus described it: 'The stock of provisions had fallen very low some time before the siege was raised. When it became apparent that famine might compel the garrison to surrender, the Sepoys offered to give up the grain to the Europeans, contenting themselves with the water in which the rice was boiled. 'It is,' they said, 'sufficient for our support, the Europeans require the grain.' And, significantly adds the historian: 'They had hitherto had little respect for the English, ranking the French as greatly their superiors in military capacity; but from this time Native opinion changed, and the defence of Arcot may

justly be regarded as the turning-point in the Eastern career of the English.' Dupleix recognized this, and all his genius was directed towards thwarting and crushing his rival. Dupleix himself was more of a strategist than a general: indeed, he himself, it has been recorded, never served in the field, but trusted to his lieutenants to execute his plans; and though some of them proved but broken reeds to lean upon, his strategy often put Clive into a very tight corner: and it was often only Clive's superior skill and daring that got him out of these, and enabled him sometimes, as it has been said, actually to wrest victory out of what looked like certain defeat. Clive had several narrow escapes of his life. One such has been thus described: 'During a night attack in which the French had succeeded in gaining an entry into the English position, aided by some English deserters, a rest-house in which Clive was sleeping was fired into, and a box which lay at his feet was shattered by bullets and a servant sleeping near him was killed. In the fighting that followed Clive was wounded, and some hours afterwards had the narrowest escape of being shot. He had advanced into the porch of the gate, and, being weak with loss of blood and fatigue, stood with his back to the wall, and leaned stooping forward on the shoulders of two sergeants. The officer in charge of the English deserters told Clive with abusive language he would shoot him, and fired his musket. The ball missed him, but went through the bodies of both sergeants on whom he was leaning, and they both fell mortally wounded.' The operations finally ended in the complete defeat of the French commanders, and of Dupleix's schemes of ambition. The master-mind of Clive had triumphed over the master-mind of Dupleix. And, eventually, the French Government recalled their agent to France. And it is to the undying shame of the French Government of the day that they should have left such a man as Dupleix to die, as he did die, some nine years afterwards, in poverty and neglect. Dupleix, whatever his faults, was a striking personality. He had failed only because he had been confronted by a man of still more commanding genius, and he deserved a better fate than that his country meted out to him, for he had striven

his best for his country, and, as the poet Clough truly says :—

> 'Tis better to have fought and lost
> Than never to have fought at all.

Clive's reputation was now greater than ever ; so great, indeed, was his prestige at this time that it is recorded that a great Mahratta chieftain, and the Muhammadan ruler of the Deccan, agreed to join the English in a certain expedition on the sole understanding that Clive, who, at the time, it must be remembered, was only a captain in the Company's service, should be given the supreme command.

On the conclusion of the campaign, Clive married, shortly before leaving for England. His wife was a sister of the friend with whom he had escaped from Madras after its capture by the French. The state of his health necessitated change and rest, and his visit to England came as a welcome break. The young officer who, only some two years before, had been given a commission as captain by the Court of Directors, on the ground that he might conceivably be of some service, was now toasted by them at their banquets as General Clive. He was presented with a sword of honour, worth not less than £500, and he displayed the true humility of a hero in refusing to accept it unless a similar honour was shown to his friend, Lawrence, to whom he always said he was indebted for all that he had ever learnt of the art of war. And indeed, Lawrence's conduct of his share of the operations against Dupleix showed that he was a commander of the first rank.

Clive returned to India with the King's commission as lieutenant-colonel, and with the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of Fort St. David, with the reversion of the Governorship of Madras. Having executed the mission with which he had been entrusted of destroying a piratical stronghold on the West of India, he proceeded to Madras, and took charge of his new appointment the day before the capture of Calcutta by the Nawab, Suraj-ud-Daulah, and the tragedy known in British Indian history as 'the Massacre of the Black Hole'. It is of interest to note here that researches made under the orders of the late

Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, who always interested himself in anything relating to the historical monuments of antiquity, and to the records of the early British settlements in India, the site of the Black Hole was located, and steps taken to mark it permanently. Lord Curzon also, at his own expense, had a stately obelisk erected in memory of the 123 prisoners who perished out of 146 imprisoned in that ghastly prison, which was calculated to be of capacity to contain only two or three prisoners at the outside. The time chosen to perpetrate this atrocious deed was the hottest time of the year, and only those who have experienced the heat of June in Calcutta can fully realize the sufferings that must have been endured.

An expedition was at once dispatched by the Madras Council to Bengal, with Clive in command of the military contingent, and Admiral Watson of the naval. The expedition only reached the river Hughli at the end of the same year. A successful encounter with the Nawab's forces on the way up the river enabled Clive to recapture Calcutta without difficulty. Suraj-ud-Daulah then made an attempt to take the place again; he had actually reached the outskirts of Calcutta, when Clive encountered him. A thick fog came on, and a fog in Lower Bengal in February can be quite as impenetrable, though it may be white instead of black, as a London fog in November. Clive suddenly found himself right inside the enemy's lines, with the Nawab's cavalry on either side of him: he marched boldly on, however, and brought all his troops safely out with him. This daring had a great effect on the imagination of the weak Suraj-ud-Daulah, and very largely paved the way for Clive's future success over him at Plassey. It is said that the will of the Nawab became almost paralysed before the more powerful will of Clive. The Nawab seems henceforth to have fluctuated between hatred and fear of the English, and even his own people lost all confidence in him. The immediate effect was that he readily signed the Treaty which Clive drew up, only, however, as it turned out afterwards, with the intention of breaking it on the first favourable opportunity. Clive had been anxious to return to Madras; the French were again attempting to restore their old ascendancy in

Southern India, and he wished to be on the spot to checkmate their plans. He first attacked and captured the French settlement in Bengal, Chandranagar. His plans for leaving Bengal were finally frustrated by the treachery of the Nawab. He was found to be intriguing with the French against the English, and had advanced the major portion of his army to the plains of Plassey, with the object of another attack on Calcutta. On hearing of this move, Clive is reported to have written to the Nawab, arraigning him for his breach of faith, and stating that 'he should wait upon him to demand satisfaction'. This he promptly proceeded to do; and he marched with his small force, some 3,000 in all, of whom only 1,000 were Europeans, to the field of Plassey. What such a march meant at a season when the torrential rains were commencing, and when the plains of Bengal are reduced to a swamp, only those can realize who know Bengal well, and especially the neighbourhood of the great battle-field, as the author of this sketch does from long residence.

He eventually arrived, his army weary from its long march, and proceeded to hold a council of war. This council, held on the eve of Plassey, and over which Clive presided, was destined to be as fraught with big results as was that other council of war, over which the Emperor Akbar presided on the eve of Panipat. In both cases the council gave a decision in favour of awaiting a more favourable opportunity to attack, the odds against success seemed so great. But in both cases the counsel given was overruled by the commanders, with the result in each case that history has recorded. Clive had at first fallen in with the views of the other members of the council; but after solitary communion with himself in a grove of mango-trees that then, though long since washed away, stood on the battle-field, he came to the momentous decision to fight at once, notwithstanding the odds against him. The forces of the Nawab consisted of 40,000 infantry, 15,000 cavalry, and 50 guns, besides a small contingent of French troops. With Clive, to decide was to act. He was not a man to let 'the native hue of resolution be sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought'. The Nawab, knowing the die was cast, made one final appeal to Mir

Jaffier. He threw his turban down on the ground in front of him, and exclaimed: 'That turban thou must defend.' It was doubtful to the very last whether Mir Jaffier would keep to the agreement he had made with Clive, and desert the Nawab. History has recorded that Clive's daring met with the reward it merited. Victory was won, and as a result of the victory the English became territorial sovereigns in India. The writer of this sketch was fortunate enough to be presented by the present owner of the land with some pieces of bark off the last tree that had remained of the famous mango grove, and to see its stump still in the ground. Not far from the battle-field is still to be seen an ancient piece of ordnance of great size and length. It has been lifted several feet off the ground, where it had originally been cast away, with the growth of that curious tree which has for centuries been held sacred by Hindus, the pipal of India, the *Ficus religiosa* of botanists. True type of Hinduism it stands, with its all-encompassing arms apparently so supple and so pliant, but possessed of the strength of the sinewy folds of a mighty serpent.

The direction of Clive's policy immediately previous to the decisive battle of Plassey, has been much criticized, and especially the matter of the two Treaties. The facts of the case are these: A wealthy Hindu banker, Amin Chand by name, had attached himself to Clive's cause as against the Nawab Suraj-ud-Daulah, in the hopes of securing a large monetary consideration. In his greed he had threatened to reveal to the Nawab the negotiations that Clive was carrying on with the enemies of the Nawab's own household, unless he were promised a very large sum of money, in the event of those negotiations being successful. Clive determined to have two Treaties drawn up, one a white one, the real one, which did not contain any clause in accordance with Amin Chand's wish; the other a red one, the false one, which did contain this clause; the former to be shown to those who were behind the scenes, the latter to Amin Chand alone. Admiral Watson, the naval officer who was co-operating with Clive, is said to have refused to sign this second Treaty, and Clive had his name attached to it by his secretary, Mr. Lushington. Thus it will be

seen there are two counts involved in the charge against Clive. The majority of his biographers have condemned him outright on both counts. Sir John Malcolm alone, his earliest biographer, has entirely acquitted him on the second count.

Now, a psychologist would probably acquit him on both counts, and his line of argument would be this: As regards the first count, the deception practised on Amin Chand; while acknowledging that deception was practised, the conduct of Clive should not be condemned offhand: it must have caused him great searchings of heart. The conclusion he eventually arrived at cannot but have justified itself to a man who was a patriot to the backbone, and to whom the interests of the Company whom he served so loyally, and, behind the Company, the interests of his country, were all paramount. 'Who am I,' he must have asked himself, 'that I should allow considerations of self to stand in the way of the interests of my country?' 'To his own lord a man stands or falls.' Clive was quite prepared to fall in the estimation of his own countrymen, for he doubtless realized that the conscience of England would condemn him; and he was not prepared to stand where, by standing, the great interests of his country which were at stake would suffer, or the lives of all those depending upon him would be sacrificed. His own life, his whole previous career had abundantly shown, did not weigh with him one jot: self never entered into his consideration, except in the shape of self-sacrifice. Conscience, moreover, must have pulled in two directions; on the one side, against an act from which his own better nature shrank as an honest and straightforward English gentleman; on the other side, in favour of not sacrificing all the great interests at stake. But what, perhaps, was the paramount consideration that finally weighed with him, was his wish to save the lives not only of his own countrymen, but those of the people of the country who had thrown in their lot with his, which the contemplated treachery of Amin Chand would most undoubtedly have imperilled. Had it been a question of imperilling the reputation which the English in India were slowly, but surely, building up, that 'the word of the British Government', as the great Sikh

Maharaja, Ranjit Singh, at a later date, pronounced, 'included everything,' there is no doubt what Clive's answer to his conscience would have been. But it was not; it was no question of deceiving a great ruler, or a great State, but only one of deceiving an unscrupulous and treacherous individual, a very Shylock among his countrymen, who would have sold his very soul for gold. And under circumstances such as these, who is there among Englishmen that would not have acted as Clive did?

As regards the second count, the use of Admiral Watson's name, Sir John Malcolm, and the testimony of such a man is not lightly to be put on one side, states that, though the Admiral would not affix his own signature, he did not demur to its being affixed by some one else. It was a maxim of the great jurist, Coke, 'Qui facit per alium, facit per se.' Clive, therefore, may be entirely acquitted on this count.

Clive himself never doubted that he was right; when, some years afterwards, his conduct was being examined into by a Committee of the House of Commons, he justified himself, and said that in similar circumstances he would do the same thing again. The writer of the article on Clive in *The Dictionary of National Biography* concludes his article thus: 'Regarding Clive's character, a great deal of misconception exists even now. The common estimate of him still is that he was a brave and able, but violent and unscrupulous man. The prejudice against him, which embittered the latter years of his life, though in a great degree unfounded, has not yet entirely passed away.' In a modern poem entitled, 'Clive's Dream before Plassey,' Clive is thus apostrophized:—

Violent and bold thou art Jehovah's servant still,
And e'en a dream to thee may be an angel of His will.

His early training under one of Napoleon's generals, fresh from Napoleonic traditions, must be an excuse for the author of these lines thus confusing boldness with badness. Much of the prejudice against Clive is doubtless due to this matter of the two Treaties. A recent writer in *The Spectator* has stated that it was once said of a famous statesman that 'his conscience became his accomplice'.

In this telling phrase is summed up the charge most generally brought by historians against Clive in this connexion, and it lies behind even Malcolm's generous apology, which is conveyed in his judgement that it was 'a pious and necessary fraud'. The writer of this sketch has not taken this view; he has preferred to treat it as an actual sacrifice of conscience for the public good on the part of Clive. And he sees no reason to deny Clive's right, even after this transaction, to that title by which he was generally recognized before it, as a high-minded English gentleman.

Before the battle of Plassey, the Court of Directors had been making arrangements for the government of their possessions in Bengal, and had already nominated their officers, without any mention of Clive. The men on the spot, however, had very wisely placed Clive at the head of affairs. As soon as the news of Plassey reached England, the Court at once appointed Clive governor. And though a new Nawab, in the person of Mir Jaffier, was the nominal ruler, Clive was now, for all practical purposes, ruler of Bengal. Mir Jaffier proved that he could not be altogether trusted. He began to intrigue with the Dutch, who had their principal settlement at Chinsura, about midway between his capital of Murshidabad and Calcutta. He saw in them another European Power, whose rivalry with the English he might bring to his aid in subverting the daily increasing power of the English. He arranged with them to bring up troops to their factory. England and Holland were at peace in Europe: this fact did not prevent Clive from taking the initiative against the Dutch, when he ascertained how readily they were listening to the overtures of the Nawab. Neither was he a man to be influenced by personal considerations: he had but just remitted the bulk of his fortune to England through the agency of the Dutch East India Company, and he was in a fair way of losing the whole of it in undertaking hostilities. This did not weigh with him for a moment. He prepared a combination of naval and military forces, and formed an organized body of volunteers, the earliest formation of such a body that is recorded in the annals of British Indian history. Then, when all was ready, he made his spring, and by the very suddenness of his action paralysed that

of his enemies: his forces captured the Dutch squadron, and compelled the Dutch to sue for peace. On this occasion he was the strategist who planned, not the general who executed. He had entrusted the operations to Major Forde, who carried them out with a success that justified his selection, and showed that Clive knew how to choose his agents. A characteristic anecdote is told in connexion with these operations against the Dutch. Clive was engaged playing cards when a note came from the major, asking for instructions. Clive simply wrote across the note: 'Dear Forde, fight them immediately; I will send you the Order in Council to-morrow.' This was the same officer whom Clive deputed to Madras to put a stop to the dangers arising in that part of India from the renewed attempts of the French to recover their ascendancy in the Councils of the Native rulers. And again his choice was justified and rewarded by the complete success of his lieutenant. Herein he was more fortunate than his great rival, Dupleix, had been in the earlier period of the struggle for ascendancy between the French and the English. The Lieutenant Dupleix had placed his trust in, capable of command as he had appeared before he was actually entrusted with a command, completely failed when the hour of action arrived. The calculations of the strategist were foiled by the incapacity of the commander.

The time came when Clive had again to seek well-earned rest in England. 'He had now proved himself,' as the historian has recorded, 'in the council chamber, as in the camp, a true leader of men.' No better testimony to the commanding influence exercised by Clive during this period of his career can be given than the remark which Mir Jaffier, the Nawab, is recorded to have made, when he heard of Clive's proposed departure from Bengal: 'I feel as if the soul were departing from the body.' Clive left India early in 1760.

His reception in England was most enthusiastic: he was received in audience by his Sovereign, and was warmly greeted by the Ministers. The Court of Directors placed a statue of him in the India House, and had a medal struck in his honour. Sir Steuart Bayley, in the course of that interesting address already referred to, stated that the

Society of Arts also struck a medal in Clive's honour after the victory of Plassey: 'On the obverse, Victory seated on an elephant, with the words, "Victory at Plassey, Clive Commander;" on the reverse, Clive as a Roman General holding a sceptre.' He was elected a Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury, and retained the seat till the day of his death. In 1762 he was raised to the Irish Peerage as Baron Clive of Plassey, and in 1764 he was made a Knight of the Bath.

During Clive's four years of absence from India, matters in Bengal had been going from bad to worse; the Governors had been setting up one Nawab, and putting down another, and had generally shown such incompetence that the English East India Company was being threatened with irretrievable ruin. The Court of Directors and the proprietors looked to Clive to retrieve affairs. Clive, with that independence of character that at all times marked him, would only agree to go out for another term of office as Governor of Bengal on the understanding that the Court would remove from his office the man who presided as chairman, Lawrence Sulivan. This man had greeted Clive effusively on his first return from India, but had since grown jealous of his growing influence, and showed his hostility to Clive by every means in his power. On his accession to the Nawabship, Mir Jaffier had granted in Jaghir for life to Clive the rent-roll the Company paid him, amounting to some £30,000 a year. Sulivan had urged the Court to disallow it; eventually a compromise had been arrived at, and Clive was allowed to retain it for ten years. The Court had to decide between Sulivan and Clive: needless to say, Sulivan had to retire. Clive then accepted the appointment.

A passage from Lord Macaulay's Essay on Clive, quoted by the writer of the article on Clive in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, will illustrate better than anything else the difficulties that Clive was called upon to overcome during this his last term of office. 'Rapacity, luxury, and the spirit of insubordination had spread from the Civil Service to the officers of the Army, and from the officers to the soldiers. The evil continued to grow till every mess-room became the seat of conspiracy and cabal, and

till the Sepoys could be kept in order only by wholesale executions.' How he accomplished his task may best be given in the words of the great historian, Earl Stanhope, 'On the whole it may be said that Clive's second command was not less important for reform than his first had been for conquest. No administration surpasses in the strength of will of the administrator, in excellence of design, in thoroughness of purpose, and, as far as his masters would permit, in thoroughness of action, his second administration of Bengal.'

The spirit in which Clive entered upon his great work was of itself a guarantee of success. Sir Steuart Bayley has given an extract from a letter he wrote to an intimate friend immediately on his return to India, which runs: 'Alas! how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the English nation, irrevocably so I fear. However, I do declare by that great Being, who is the Searcher of all hearts, and to whom we must be accountable if there be a hereafter, that I am come out with a mind superior to all corruption, and that I am determined to destroy these great and growing evils, or perish in the attempt.' His second term of office extended over a period of less than two years, but it was long enough for him to redeem his promise thus so solemnly made. And, though final success was not his, he laid the foundations of good government, and established the principles on which the future administration of the Indian Empire was to be carried on; and to the foundations which he laid, and the principles of duty and responsibility which he established, it is due that that administration has compelled the admiration of the world. He reformed the Civil Service, and started it on that honourable career which ended in its being recognized as the historian has well said, as 'one of the noblest services the world has seen, pure in its honour, devoted in the performance of its duties, and conspicuous for its integrity'. Similarly, he succeeded in restoring the Army to its sense of duty and loyalty. Clive had considered it his duty as the most faithful servant of the Company to enforce a recent order withdrawing an extra money allowance that the troops had been drawing as a bonus

since Plassey, and which they had come to look upon as a right. At a very critical juncture, when the Mahrattas were almost at their gates, no less than two hundred officers of the Army agreed to throw up their commissions on a certain day. A weaker man might well have been tempted to make concessions at such a time: not so Clive. His firmness, combined with rare tact and magnanimity, eventually won the day. By obtaining the grant of the Diwani, or the collection and administration of the revenues of Bengal, from the Mogul Emperor, with the consent of the Nawab, who was to receive a large monetary consideration, he strengthened the hold of the Company on its possessions, and made it de jure what it already was de facto, the Sovereign and Ruling Power of Bengal. Having accomplished all that the limitations imposed upon him by the Court of Directors would enable him to accomplish, and having, in the process, again suffered seriously in health, Clive finally left India early in 1767, after a connexion with that country that had lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

Clive might well have expected, after his strenuous labours on his country's behalf, to be allowed to live a life of dignified leisure in retirement. But it was not to be. Like many another great man, he had made enemies; and a campaign of calumny was set on foot against him, with the object of compelling a Parliamentary inquiry. He would have been more than human had his spirit not chafed at the attacks made upon him, and at the accusations which he knew to be unjust as well as false. A debate was one day being carried on in the House of Commons on Indian affairs: he delivered an impassioned speech in which he vindicated his administration of affairs in India so eloquently that he called forth that tribute from the Earl of Chatham, who was present, to which reference has been already made, that he had never heard a finer speech. Clive was unable, however, to prevent his enemies carrying the day so far as the holding of a Parliamentary inquiry was concerned. In the course of it Clive was subjected to a most rigorous examination and cross-examination, which he endured with firmness and equanimity. It was during this inquiry that, after describ-

ing the many temptations he had been exposed to, and the many opportunities for enriching himself that had been placed in his way, he uttered the ever-famous exclamation: 'By God, Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation.' The inquiry extended over two Sessions, and was only completed in 1773. A general resolution was passed to the effect that appropriation by servants of the State of acquisitions made by the arms of the State was to be condemned. But when the House was pressed to pass a particular resolution to the effect that Clive had abused his powers and thereby set an evil example to the servants of the public, the previous question was put and carried. A motion was subsequently put that Clive had rendered great and meritorious services to the State, and was passed without a division. Thus what his enemies had intended to result in condemnation resulted in what was, for all practical purposes, a panegyric. But Clive had felt the strain. The mental anguish he had suffered, though he had not shown it, combined with physical suffering, had been too much for even his brave spirit, and within a year of the closing of the inquiry Clive was dead; he put an end to his own life at the early age of forty-nine.

The poet Browning has, with rare insight, taken as the theme of one of his *Dramatic Idylls*, one famous scene out of the many with which the drama of Clive's career is crowded, which illustrates those characteristics of his hero which especially distinguished him, his physical and moral courage, and his magnanimity. And no one will feel disposed to quarrel with his noble treatment of his theme, although, with that licence that is allowed to the poet alone of writers, and which makes of a poet's imagination 'a chartered libertine', he may have had recourse to a certain amount of poetic embroidery. Even with this, all will recognize in the portrait a speaking likeness, and will feel no counterfeit presentment is here. No apology is needed for the incorporation within the limits of this sketch of some part at least of this famous scene. Clive and an intimate friend are depicted as holding sweet converse together.

Suddenly, his friend remarks:—

'Clive told me once, I want to say,
Which feat out of all those famous doings bore the bell away
In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the mob's rough guess—
Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive called courageousness? . . .
If a friend has leave to question—When were you most brave, in short?'

Clive makes answer:—

'When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the instance half as plain
As another instance that's a brain-lodged crystal—curse it!—here
Freezing when my memory touches—ugh!—the time I felt most fear.
Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed fear—anyhow,
Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I shiver now.'

The friend replies:—

'Fear,' smiled I; 'well, that's the rarer: that's a specimen to seek,
Ticket up in one's museum, "Mind-Freaks—Lord Clive's Fear, Unique."'

Clive then goes back in memory to his early days when he was a clerk, and when he was obliged to have recourse to some excitement to keep himself sane. Of the three alternatives, gaming, drinking, or crazing, as he expresses it, he chose gaming. His companions were officers. He then describes how he detected one of them cheating at cards one day, and how he called out:—

'What, you force a card, you cheat, sir?'

The officers all throng round him, prepared to take their fellow officer's part. Clive repeats his charge:—

'Well, you forced a card and cheated!'

The officer, pointing his pistol, demanded a withdrawal of the charge:—

'Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full.'

Clive's only reply is :—

'Well, you cheated.'

The excitement increases, and a duel is decided on :—

'Let civilians be instructed : henceforth simply ply the pen,
Fly the sword ! This clerk 's no swordsman ? Suit him with a pistol, then.'

Clive, in his eagerness, lets off his pistol before he intends, and the bullet flies high. The officer then holds his pistol to Clive's head : and exclaims :

'Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners ! Did I cheat ? '

All Clive says is :—

'Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and this moment know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you fire and—go to Hell ! '

Clive continues his story :—

'Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice : then :—" Laugh at Hell who list.
I can't ! God 's no fable either. Did this boy's eye wink once ? No !
There 's no standing him, and Hell and God, all three against me——so,
I did cheat ! "
And down he threw the pistol,
Out rushed.'

His fellow officers first stand silent in blank astonishment, and then exclaim against their late boon companion, and brother-officer :—

'Punishment the Service cries for : let disgrace be wiped away.'

Then Clive, with rare magnanimity, exclaims :—

'Gentlemen, attention—pray!
First, one word . . .
Whosoever, all or each,
To the disadvantage of the man who spared me, utters speech—
To his face, behind his back—that speaker has to do with me.'

On his friend protesting that he can detect no fear in this scene, Clive persists that it was an instance of fear, saying :—

'You've my story, there's your instance: fear I did, you see!'

His friend still protests, and exclaims :—

'Fear—I wish I could detect there—Courage fronts me, plain enough.'

The scene closes, as Clive is heard to whisper :—

Something like—'Yes, courage: only fools will call it fear.'

And the world, which is not made up of fools, will hold that Clive did display the truest courage, that which overcomes fear, and will prefer to style what he himself has called Fear, as Fearful Courage.

And in that last tragic scene that closed his life, the world will, with the poet, also see only one more instance of 'Fearful Courageousness'.

This sketch may well conclude with the words engraved on the memorial tablet erected to his memory at his old school, which could only have been written of a great and, at the same time, a high-minded man.

'Twice Governor of Fort William in Bengal, he won the love of the Native Peoples, and left the Administration Pure.'

# CHAPTER II

## THE FOUNDING OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

### WARREN HASTINGS, 1732–1818.

WARREN HASTINGS was a scion of a Worcestershire family of distinguished ancestry; the old family seat had, however, passed out of their hands. It was the dream of his early boyhood to recover it again; and late in life he had the satisfaction of being able to do so. He was not the first dreamer of dreams, who was to prove that he could also be a distinguished man of action; and, after all, are not dreams often synonymous with high ideals and enthusiasm, without which it is given to few to command success? One of his biographers has said of him: 'A bold dreamer, he showed that he possessed almost unequalled executive ability and practical good sense.' His grandfather was Rector of Daylesford, where the old family Manor-House stood, and Hastings's early years were spent at the Rectory. He may therefore legitimately be ranked amongst those 'sons of the Rectory' who have gone forth into the world to achieve fame in the service of their country. An uncle of his took charge of his education for some years and placed him at Westminster School, where he soon won a reputation for scholarship; and he appears to have been popular with boys and masters. On the death of his uncle, he was placed in charge of a guardian, who, having some connexion with the India Board, decided to remove him from school and place him with a private tutor to have him prepared for his future career as a writer in the Company's service. His head master expostulated: 'What,' he exclaimed, 'lose my favourite pupil, the best scholar of his year.' And he even offered to pay all expenses both of school and college. However, he was removed, and in the course of the following year he was dispatched to India, being eighteen years of age at the time.

He duly arrived at Calcutta towards the close of 1750, after a voyage of nearly ten months. The Company's principal settlements at this time were at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. The governing body of each settlement consisted of a president and a council of senior merchants. The pay of the Company's servants was hardly on an extravagant scale. Writers drew only £5 a year, with free commons and a yearly supply of Madeira. They had, however, the privilege of engaging in private trade on their own account. Naturally, among the younger officers of the Company there was great variety of character. Some throve in their ventures, and lived extravagantly: many of their gains, indeed, being 'ill got', were also 'ill spent'; and it is recorded of such that 'they could afford to sit down to dinner with a band of music, and to drive out in a carriage and four'. Others, and amongst these, as might have been expected from his scrupulous ideas of honour and honesty, was Hastings, practically starved, and of them it is recorded that 'they often had to go to bed soon after sunset, as they could not bear the cost of candles and supper'. Calcutta at this time, moreover, was an unhealthy place to live in: fever and dysentery were at all times prevalent; and this was not to be wondered at, considering the swamps and jungles with which it was closely surrounded, and the fact that the only scavengers were jackals, kites, vultures, crows, and the great ungainly adjutant bird. The writer of this sketch can recall the advent of these great birds into Calcutta, which coincided with the periodical setting in of the rains, when its natural food, the frog, abounded. Hastings found his work consisted in the usual duties of a commercial clerk, such as in the present day are performed by that most useful, if excitable, member of the community, the Babu, a born penman and accountant. He made good use of what little leisure he had in learning the vernacular languages of the country.

After some three years spent in Calcutta, Hastings was transferred to Kasimbazar, where the Company had a very flourishing factory, or house of business, as it would now be styled, in the very centre of the most important silk-weaving and ivory industry in India. The Ganges then

ran under the walls of the factory, but its old bed has long since silted up, and the old site is now far inland. This constant shifting of river beds is one of the greatest difficulties modern engineers have to deal with; and the rivers of Lower Bengal have been the training-ground, indeed, of more than one engineer officer destined to achieve a name for himself in the domain of Egyptian irrigation. It is also a constant cause of dispute between neighbouring landowners: a man may go to bed one night leaving his lands intact, and next morning may find a considerable slice transferred to his neighbour across the water. Like many other places in the India of the day, it had no great reputation for health, and for that matter it has not now. It has been known as 'The White Man's Grave'; and certainly the small cemetery, which still exists on the old site, affords some evidence of this title being justified, from the number of graves in it of comparatively young men. Hastings's first wife lies buried here. Hastings soon gained a name for efficiency and honesty in his new appointment, and, at the early age of twenty-one, he found himself with a seat on the council of the factory.

The death of the Nawab, Ali Verdi Khan, about this time, and the accession of Suraj-ud-Daulah, or, as his name is sometimes spelt, Chiragh-ud-Daulah, 'The Lamp of the State,' brought about a change of scene. Ali Verdi Khan was a bigger man, both morally and physically, than his successor. His sword, which is still to be seen in the armoury of the Murshidabad Palace, proves that he was at any rate bigger physically—it is the only sword into the handle of which the average Englishman can put his hand with any comfort. The existing palace at Murshidabad, which has taken the place of the old one, contains one of the finest banqueting halls to be seen anywhere in India. In it are to be seen some striking portraits of Mir Jaffier and his son Meeran; and one celebrated picture which represents a famous gourmet of his time with a collection before him, as he sits seated on the ground, of every possible delicacy that can tickle the palate: he was a man of enormous capacity of appetite, and consequently of enormous girth, and naturally so,

as it was his business to amuse his masters when they wanted a new sensation, or had themselves lost the capacity for enjoying the pleasures of the table, by an exhibition of voracity. Sanskrit literature shows that such an amusement was not unknown in the courts of Hindu sovereigns also in ancient times. An interesting survival of the respect that the people of the country have always shown for a great name exists in a custom they have to this day of always lowering their umbrellas when they have occasion to pass through the precincts of the palace. A former administrator of the district, who was a bit of a Bahadur, hearing of this ancient custom, determined to exact a similar kotow from all who passed his residence, or met him when he took his rides abroad. He was soon the possessor of a museum of antique umbrellas of all shapes and sizes confiscated by his peons from all who failed to accord this mark of respect to the British Raj, embodied in himself, as very few ever went to reclaim their property for fear of further pains and penalties. An ancient and picturesque ceremony takes place annually at Murshidabad, which is known as the Bera Festival. It is held in honour of the founder of the city, Murshid Ali. It consists of a procession down the river, and past the palace, of the great State barges of the Nawab, manned by twenty oarsmen, and of a great raft with a model upon it of the old palace, in bamboo and tinsel, all brilliantly illuminated. Ali Verdi Khan had got on well with his English neighbours. Suraj-ud-Daulah, on the other hand, soon grew jealous of their rising predominance : and he attacked and captured the factory of Kasimbazar. Hastings was among the prisoners he took ; but a friend of his, the chief of a neighbouring Dutch factory, went bail for him and he was released. The knowledge he had early acquired of the vernaculars was now to be of use to him, and he was employed as an intermediary between the commander of the British forces—who was at a place on the river, whither the Governor had retreated after the capture of Calcutta by the Nawab—and the ministers of the Nawab. The object of his mission was to get supplies for the garrison. He succeeded in his negotiations. His knowledge of the vernaculars again came in useful while he was serving

under Clive as a volunteer during the operations against the Nawab. He was chosen to negotiate terms of peace between the English and the Nawab.

With the change for the better that took place in the fortunes of the English after Plassey, came also a change in the fortunes of Hastings himself. He was appointed first assistant to the Resident, and afterwards Resident at the court of the new Nawab, Mir Jaffier. He was only twenty-five at the time; but his opportunity had arrived. He soon won a reputation for skill and uprightness in the discharge of the duties of his position, and this reputation was to serve him well. A seat in the Calcutta Council having fallen vacant in 1761, Hastings was appointed to it.

Clive's successor in the Government of Bengal had deposed the Nawab, Mir Jaffier, and had set up another Nawab, in the person of Mir Kasim, in his place. At the time when Hastings joined the Council, Vansittart was Governor, and President of the Council. He seems to have done what he could to control his Council and to stem the tide of corruption that had set in everywhere; but, though a well-meaning man, he was not a man of strong character. Hastings, however, supported him loyally, but they were unable to do much in the face of the opposition of the majority of the Council, who showed but small regard for any interests but their own. The Nawab had complained bitterly to the Governor of the unfair trade privileges claimed by the English merchants, and he was rapidly becoming alienated from his English allies in consequence. The Governor sent Hastings on a special mission to the court of the Nawab as peacemaker. He was very cordially received, and the proposals which he placed before the Nawab for the regulation of all inland traffic were accepted and promulgated by the Nawab. The Governor had also approved of these recommendations. He had said to the Council: 'The existing state of things boded no good to the Nawab's revenue, or to the quiet of the country, or the honour of England.' In the face of this declaration the majority of the Council repudiated the agreement. The Nawab then retaliated by removing the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Company's servants, and by putting all inland trade upon one footing. Hastings came

in for the hostility of both the Nawab and the Council: while the former regarded him as a traitor, the latter considered him to be too partial to the Nawab. Mir Kasim was deposed, and Mir Jaffier was set up again. The result was war. This was precipitated by the act of the Company's agent at Patna in seizing the city. He and the Englishmen with him were all massacred by order of Mir Kasim. The campaign, in which the Nawab was joined by the Mogul Emperor, and the Nawab Vizier of Oudh, and in which several thousand Afghan horsemen took part, ended in victory for the English, owing to its successful conduct by Major Hector Munro. An incident that had occurred at the meeting of the Council that was held to discuss Hastings's concessions to the Nawab, serves to illustrate the disunion at the time prevailing. One member of Council deliberately struck Hastings in the face. Hastings kept his temper, and allowed an ample apology to atone for the insult.

Hastings had now fourteen years' service to his credit, and he proceeded to England for change in the very year that Clive had undertaken a second term of office as Governor of Bengal. It says much for the character of Hastings that, while so many of his colleagues were at this time enriching themselves, he remained honourably poor. Yet out of his poverty he did not forget the widow of the man who had charged himself with his education during his early years; he generously settled a small annuity upon her. He found it no easy thing to obtain re-employment in India: an application he made to the Court of Directors a year after his return was rejected; and he was too honest and self-respecting to push his own interests as many another man would have done. He found his consolation in literary pursuits. He was a true interpreter of human nature who wrote :—

> Tasks in hours of insight willed
> May be in hours of gloom fulfilled.

Many a man, before and after Hastings, has found his consolation thus. During Hastings's stay in England he made the acquaintance of the great lexicographer, Dr. Samuel Johnson. The Doctor gave his testimony to

Hastings's character: he remarked that 'his personal knowledge of Hastings was enough to make him wish for more'. Hastings was not a man whose merits were likely to remain unknown and unacknowledged long. He attracted attention by the straightforward manner in which he gave his evidence on Indian affairs before a Parliamentary Committee. He also laid before the India House his great scheme for the establishment of a college in England where the Company's writers might gain some acquaintance with Oriental classics before proceeding to India. He was thus the pioneer in the movement which led at a later date to the establishment of the East India College at Haileybury. His second application for employment received attention, and he was appointed to a seat on the Madras Council. The letter of appointment issued by the Court of Directors was sufficient to show that his services were now fully recognized: 'Mr. Warren Hastings is a man who has served us many years upon the Bengal Establishment with great ability and unblemished character.'

Hastings returned to India in 1769. The state of affairs in Madras at this time was not satisfactory. The Government had just brought a war with Haidar Ali to an end with terms of peace practically dictated by that ruler himself under the very walls of Madras; and the Nawab of the Karnatik had been showing himself inclined to thwart the Madras Government in various ways. Hastings showed so much tact in dealing with this prince that, when he was leaving Madras for Calcutta, he received an assurance 'of the Nawab's good will, gratitude, and entire satisfaction with every part of his conduct affecting himself'. In all he undertook, indeed, Hastings showed zeal and care for his masters' interests. His success in placing the trade investments of the Company on a satisfactory footing was so appreciated that, on the occurrence of a vacancy on the Council in Calcutta, he was appointed to fill it. The position he thus secured was that of Second-in-Council with the reversion of the Governorship.

The India Board were in want of a man 'who might extricate their affairs in Bengal from the tangle of debt, mismanagement, anarchy, and wrong-doing in which they had become involved', and in Hastings they found the

man, 'the one strong man,' as he was described, 'whose high abilities, unblemished character, and undoubted zeal in his masters' service,' might effect the desired reforms if any one could. He was not destined to remain long second-in-command. He had been in Calcutta less than three months when he took over charge of the office of Governor, in 1772.

Hastings had prepared himself for the great and difficult task that now devolved upon him by hard preliminary work. He had been much encouraged by a letter he had recently received from his old chief, Lord Clive. In it he had been exhorted 'to set the public interest above all private claims, to trust his own judgement rather than that of others, to plan carefully and to act daringly in time of danger, never entertaining a thought of miscarriage till the misfortune actually happened, and even then setting to work upon new schemes, with an opinion that time and perseverance would get the better of everything'. He was not to receive that willing co-operation from the majority of the Council which he might reasonably have expected, knowing how high his own ideals and aims were: and he was called upon to exercise the greatest tact and judgement, and a patience that has been described as sublime, to prevent an entire miscarriage of all his well-conceived plans for the consolidation of the Company's possessions in Bengal and elsewhere. There were great problems before him; a grievous famine had occurred in the country some two years before he assumed office, and the revenues of the Company had been so straitened that there was a not very remote contingency of its becoming insolvent. The Company's finances, therefore, demanded his first attention. Just at this time the Company had expressed its determination to stand forth as its own Diwan, and to sweep away all native agency in the superior control of revenue and finance administration. This necessitated the removal of the Deputy Diwans of Bengal and Behar, the one a Muhammadan gentleman, the other a Hindu nobleman. These officers had had practically all the powers of Governors, and they appear to have used their powers well; orders, however, came out that they were to be put on their trial. Hastings, with that sense

of fairness and justice that at all times distinguished him, assured them of his sympathy and of his desire to afford them all facilities for their defence. The two men were honourably acquitted and both received office again under the administration. A Hindu nobleman, Maharaja Nand Kumar, who had been discovered in a treasonable correspondence at the time that he had been the Nawab's minister at Murshidabad, and who had been disgraced in consequence, and sent under arrest to Calcutta, had come into collision with Hastings during his period of office as Resident at the court of the Nawab, and bore him no good feeling. This man had been employed in the prosecution of the two Native Deputy Diwans, and he had been much disappointed at their acquittal, as he had hoped to take the place of one of them. His feeling against Hastings had become still more embittered, and he henceforth awaited an opportunity to do him a mischief. That opportunity was not long in coming.

With that honesty and thoroughness that characterized all that he planned or executed, Hastings began to attack class prejudices and vested interests where he realized that they stood in the path of reform; thus he began to arouse against himself the hostility of all those whose interests were affected by his measures. And the Maharaja Nand Kumar carefully fanned this hostility, and kept it active against the time when it might serve his purpose. Very soon after he had entered upon office, Hastings appointed a Revenue Survey Commission to make a tour of investigation through all the districts of Bengal; and in order to ensure that it did its work thoroughly, he accompanied it on its way for several marches, and this in the hot and steamy month of June. He found it necessary to attack monopolists, and to carry through various judicial and administrative reforms. Some English collectors having proved inefficient and incapable, he removed them, and replaced them by able and experienced Native revenue officers; and in order to secure their honesty he placed over them the best European agency that he could command. This was a system that was afterwards recommended for adoption in the Haidarabad State by Sir Charles Metcalfe, when he was dealing with

corruption on the part of the Native revenue officers in that State. Hastings grouped his districts and placed commissioners over the groups. This special task of repressing corruption and oppression amongst the Company's servants was one that required more tact, perhaps, than all his other tasks put together. He was too wise to use all the powers given him for this purpose. He said, 'The powers entrusted to me for this purpose could only destroy every other that I am possessed of by arming my hand against every man's, and every man's against me.'

In place of two Revenue Boards hitherto located at Patna and Murshidabad, he established one Revenue Board at Calcutta. He also established two Courts of Appeal, Civil and Criminal, at the new head quarters of Government. A Native Chief Justice was placed at the head of the Criminal Appeal Court, and Native assessors, skilled in expounding all the subtleties of Hindu and Muhammadan law were appointed to aid the judges. In order to make the judicial system still more effective, he had codes of Muhammadan and Hindu law prepared: the first part of this task was easier than the second. In order to cope with the difficulty of Hindu laws, which are buried in a great multitude of books, Hastings brought down to Calcutta ten of the most learned Pandits in the country to compile a digest of Hindu law. Of course it was an impossible task, as Elphinstone was afterwards to find, to compile a complete digest; but something was done: translations were made from Sanskrit into Persian, and another translation was made from Persian into English. Hastings sent the earlier portion of this work to the great lawyer, Baron Mansfield, who had been one of his schoolfellows at Westminster School, 'as a proof,' he wrote, 'that the inhabitants of this land are not in the savage state in which they have been unfairly represented.' In cases where both parties in a suit-at-law were European British subjects, English law was administered in a court known as the Mayor's Court. There was also a court which was of some use to tradesmen and merchants, which was known as the Small Cause Court.

Another matter that required his attention was the reorganization of the police. Hereditary bands of robbers

were constantly setting up a reign of terror in the defenceless villages of Bengal. Hastings took strong measures to repress them. Chief officers of police were placed in every district, with power to call upon landowners and revenue officers to assist them. Hastings had long suspected some of the former of complicity with the Dakaits, or highway robbers. Just so at a later date the Mahratta chieftains were suspected of complicity with the Pindaris; and in each case there were very valid grounds for suspicion. If he had had his way, he would have succeeded in completely stamping out the organization. He wished to make it compulsory for all landowners to assist the police, and to make them responsible for all robberies occurring on their own estates; but he was overruled by a majority of his Council. And so these Zamindars continued to add to their revenues by partaking of the bounty of the Dakaits. Hastings also succeeded in hunting out of Bengal the bands of Sannyasis, or religious mendicants, who used annually to swarm into Bengal from beyond the river Brahmaputra, nominally on pilgrimage to the holy Shrine of Jagannath, Lord of the Universe, at Puri, in Orissa; actually they were but organized bands of robbers. They picked up children, and waylaid travellers that came in their way; and on one occasion they succeeded in cutting up a body of Sepoys under English officers in Eastern Bengal.

Such were some of the multifarious duties that devolved upon Hastings at this period of his career, and which one day elicited from him remarks which contain a note of impatience not usual with him: 'I am beginning to get a mind discomposed and a temper fermented almost to vinegar by the weight of affairs to which the former is unequal, and by everlasting teasing; complainants hallo me for justice whenever I look out of a window, or take an airing.' But in all things he continued to be the most faithful servant of the Company: 'My whole time and all my thoughts,' he wrote, 'and I may add all my passions, are devoted to the service of the Company.' In this he was only following the example set by his great predecessor in office, Lord Clive.

During this period of Hastings's administration, it had devolved upon him to render military aid to the young

Raja of Koch Behar, whose territory had been invaded by the Deb Raja of Bhutan. After some stubborn fighting the Raja of Bhutan had been glad to sign a Treaty under which Bhutia merchants were allowed to trade with Eastern Bengal, and an annual fair was established for their benefit at Rangpur. Though the Government of Bhutan is nominally of a twofold character, with a spiritual chief in the person of the Dharma Raja, Chief of Religion, and a temporal ruler in the person of the Deb Raja, King by the Grace of God, the real ruler of the State is the chief councillor, known as the Tongsa Penlop; and he was chosen as Hereditary Raja in 1907. Bhutan is now recognized as within the sphere of influence of the British Government; but at this time Tibet claimed the suzerainty. In Tibet, again, a dual Government existed: the Tashi Lama who was resident at the great Monastery of Tashi-Lunpo, in the immediate neighbourhood of Shigatse, claimed equal power with the Dalai Lama, who ruled at Lhasa. The latter, however, as resident at the capital, was generally recognized as having superior authority. The then Tashi Lama wrote to Hastings and asked for merciful treatment for his vassal the Bhutia Chief. Hastings thought this an excellent opportunity for opening up trade with Tibet. He therefore sent a mission under a young civilian, George Bogle, to see what could be done in this direction. The Tashi Lama received the youthful envoy very courteously; but, under orders from the Dalai Lama, Bogle was not allowed to visit Lhasa, and nothing came of his mission. The friendly Tashi Lama died at Pekin in 1780, and a year afterwards George Bogle died. A second mission was dispatched at a later date by Hastings, under Turner; but did not penetrate further into the country than Tashi-Lunpo, and none of the anticipated results followed. At length all passes into Tibet from India were closed by China, Tibet's Suzerain, fear of aggression on the part of the Ghurkas of Nipal being the ostensible reason for this action. Travellers from the West and the North endeavoured to penetrate the country from time to time; but they were invariably, and not always courteously, turned back before they could reach the capital. One traveller only from the side of India succeeded

in the dangerous enterprise; but he was himself a Lama, and was a teacher of the Tibetan language in one of the schools at Darjiling. For all practical purposes, however, he was an official of the Indian Government, as he was working for and in concert with that intrepid Indian explorer, Sarat Chandra Das, a member of the Bengal Educational Service. It remained finally for the Government of Lord Curzon to tear away the veil from the mysterious and forbidden city, but only after a military expedition, which was necessitated by an act of aggression on Indian territory on the part of the Tibetans. The ultimate result of this expedition has been the opening up of certain trade marts; but under the most recent agreement between Great Britain and Russia further peaceful penetration into Tibet from the side of India has been stopped. Thus while formerly the door into Tibet from India was locked by a power from the Tibetan side of the frontier, it is now locked from the hither side by the action of the Government of India itself, or at any rate, if it is not entirely locked, the key is very jealously guarded. The present Tashi Lama has been appointed by China the successor to the dignities of the Dalai Lama, and may be regarded, therefore, as the responsible ruler of the State. It is of interest to note that he was the guest of the Government of India during the cold season of 1905–6. He aroused considerable interest in Calcutta, being regarded as a young man of remarkable character and intelligence. His followers also excited attention by their quaint but picturesque costumes.

Hastings's great work of reorganization of the internal administration of the Bengal Provinces had taken him less than three years to accomplish, but within that time, as his biographer notes, 'he had succeeded in planning out and laying the foundations of civilized rule over the Provinces that had been won by the sword and the diplomacy of Clive. He had made his influence felt for good in all branches of administrative work, and that amid unparalleled drawbacks of climate, opposition, raw inexperience of many of his agents, and contradictory orders from England.'

In the domain of Foreign Affairs, the policy of Hastings

was to check the ever-growing predominance of the Mahrattas, who for many years to come were destined to be thorns in the side of the British rulers of India. They had penetrated into Northern India and had reinstated on the throne of Delhi the old Emperor, Shah Alam, who, having at one time been the pensioner of the British Government, was destined to become so again at no very distant date. The Mahrattas, whose destinies were largely guided at this time by a man of commanding personality, recognized even by Hastings himself as practically his equal in statecraft, and a born leader of men. The great chieftain, Madhava Rao Scindia, or, briefly, Madhoji, as he was often styled, had realized the importance of having on their side the weight of the name of the great Mogul, mere shadow of a name as it was, while extending and consolidating their influence in the North. They had even penetrated into Rohil-Khand; and the Rohillas, through their Lord Protector, as the principal chieftain of the clans was designated, had invited the aid of the Nawab Vizier of Oudh to expel the intruders, and they had bound themselves under a Treaty to pay forty lakhs of rupees in return for his assistance. This Treaty had been signed in the presence of the officer who commanded the British troops sent by Hastings in response to an appeal from the Nawab for his assistance. Hastings, while quite prepared to recognize certain spheres of influence within the limits of which the Mahrattas might consolidate their power, was strongly opposed to their being in a position from which they could command Oudh, and have the power of making the ruler of Oudh their vassal, as they undoubtedly would, had they succeeded in conquering and annexing Rohil-Khand to their dominions. This, then, was the secret of his policy in thus lending military aid to the Nawab at this crisis.

The Mahrattas, driven out of Rohil-Khand, looked about for other means of extending their influence; and they were not long in finding such. They obtained from the Emperor, now a mere puppet in their hands, the grant of the Provinces of Korah and Allahabad. Hastings saw at once what this would mean: it would entirely undo the work of his predecessor, Clive, in making Oudh the

buffer-State between the British sphere of influence and the States to the North-West, and would allow the Mahrattas to thrust a wedge in between the Bengal Provinces and that friendly buffer-State. He determined at once to checkmate the design. These Provinces had been originally granted to the Emperor by Clive after the defeat of the coalition of Native Powers against the British. The measures Hastings took were prompt. He first garrisoned the Provinces with British troops to prevent their falling into Mahratta hands, and he then entered into negotiations with Shah Alam, offering to rule the Provinces in trust for him. But Shah Alam refused to do anything until his arrears of tribute were paid. This Hastings declined to do. The Emperor had broken his compact with the English, and had become the tool and accomplice of the Mahrattas, and on grounds of public policy alone, he was fully justified in so refusing. Hastings then entered into an agreement with the Nawab Vizier of Oudh, making the Provinces over to him on certain conditions, one of which was the payment of a large sum of money. This agreement was known as the Treaty of Benares. Hastings had a twofold object in thus acting. Constant demands were being made upon the Company by the King's Ministers in England for loans, and he himself was being continually pressed for money by the Company: he had, therefore, the enrichment of the Company's finances in view. He also wished to erect a bulwark against Mahratta aggression. When one of his councillors, in opposing this agreement, used the argument that Shah Alam might now for his part transfer to other hands the powers granted to the English in Bengal, Hastings made the statesman-like reply that the Company's rule rested on no Sanads issued by the Mogul: 'The sword,' he exclaimed, 'which gave us the dominion of Bengal, must be the instrument of its preservation, and if (which God forbid) it shall ever cease to be ours, the next proprietor will derive his rights of possession from the same natural charter.'

It has been necessary to deal with this subject of Mahratta encroachments rather fully, as in it will be found the key of Hastings's policy in connexion with the Rohillas, which

has been so much criticized by earlier historians, some of whom have seen in it a blot upon his escutcheon. Later researches, and notably those made by Mr. Forrest, show that the legends elaborated by Burke and Macaulay had no foundation in fact, but were based on reckless slanders set on foot by a certain officer whom Hastings had mortally offended by having to effect a limitation of his powers, which he was using to aggrandize himself to the detriment of the public interest. These slanders had been backed up by the malevolence of his old enemy, Francis. Hastings himself thought that an unfavourable judgement might possibly be passed upon his conduct in England, where he considered that too much stress was laid upon general maxims, and too little attention paid to the circumstances which sometimes require an exception to be made from them. It is generally agreed now that his policy was justified by high political expediency. It gave a set-back to Mahratta aggression on the frontiers of Bengal from which they never recovered. Had they been allowed to have their way, they would have gained a permanent footing in Rohil-Khand. Oudh would then have been at their mercy, and the British would have been called upon to fight for their very existence in Bengal, and possibly in India. The Rohillas, moreover, it must be remembered, were themselves foreigners to the land: they were Pathans, whose only right to the land they had occupied was the sword, and they would see nothing strange in the fact of the sword of a stronger displacing them. They had been intriguing with the great Mahratta chieftains, Scindia and Holkar, for a raid upon Oudh, and they had repudiated payment of the amount agreed on by the Treaty between themselves and the Nawab Vizier of Oudh that has been already referred to. The Nawab called upon Hastings for a contingent to aid him in thwarting the designs of the Rohillas against his territory by an attack upon their lands. Under the terms of a Treaty made by Clive between the British and the Nawab, when he was settling the question of frontiers, Hastings was bound to grant this military assistance. He did so; and the result was the conquest and annexation to Oudh of Rohil-Khand. Some 18,000 fighting-men were deported across the Ganges; many

thousands remained behind, as did also over a million Hindu cultivators, who were in no way affected, as is their wont, by the change of masters. Certain charges of inhumanity were also levelled against Hastings: he was accused of 'looking on with folded hands while the villages of these people were being burnt, their children butchered, and their women violated'. These charges were only on a level with those which have only recently been brought, and by a countryman of their own, though fortunately representing no one but himself, against English officials in Eastern Bengal The charges against Hastings were effectually disproved. He had been careful to write to the Nawab before the operations commenced, that 'Englishmen disapprove with abhorrence of all inhumanity and oppression'. In making their charges, Hastings's accusers forgot one thing, and that was that the bulk of the British troops employed were Sepoys of the same race as those employed by the Nawab, and no more savages than were the Pathans themselves. But partiality and prejudice will ever blind the eyes of those who will not to see.

Under an Act known as Lord North's Regulating Act, the Council of the Governor of Bengal had been put on a new footing. During Clive's administration the Calcutta Council had been a comparatively large one, but the responsibility of action had devolved upon an Executive Council consisting of three members; the Governor was President of this Council, and had a casting-vote. It was under such a system that Clive had been enabled to carry out his reforms. The larger Council ceased to exist, and a new Council was constituted to consist of five members, including the Governor-General, as the Governor of Bengal was henceforth to be styled. The most difficult part of Hastings's whole career was to commence with the appointment of this new Council; and for a period of four years at least, commencing with 1774, he was to meet with continual opposition to his policy. Three new members had been recently sent out from England with prejudices already shaped; they formed a majority, and it was said of them that 'they never lost a chance of wounding their President's pride, ignoring his authority, or of undoing his work'. It was only his patient and calm courage that

kept Hastings at his post under the insults he daily received at their hands; not once or twice he had actually to leave the Council chamber altogether when their violence passed all bounds of endurance.

The proceedings of the first meeting were but a forecast of what he was to expect at the hands of the opposition. Hastings had reviewed his past administration; when he came to the Treaty of Benares and the Rohilla War, he was ordered to produce the correspondence that had passed between him and his agent at Lucknow relative to these events. He refused to do so. They retorted by voting for a recall of Hastings's agent from Lucknow; and they further decided to demand from the Nawab payment of all sums due by him under a threat of removing British troops from Oudh altogether. This reversal of Hastings's policy was unintelligible to the Nawab: he had been a faithful ally, and he was personally much attached to Hastings himself. It is said that when Hastings's agent showed him his letters of recall, he burst into tears. Not very long afterwards he died, and almost with his dying breath he dictated a letter to the Governor-General, imploring him to continue his friendship with his son and successor, the Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah. The Council, however, in opposition to Hastings's wishes, forced a Treaty upon the new Nawab, increasing the amount of the subsidy to be paid by him, and obtaining from him a transfer of the revenue rights over the domains of his feudatory, Chait Singh, the Zamindar of Benares, who thus became the feudatory of the British. The Nawab was also compelled to give up to his mother, and grandmother, the Begums of Oudh, the treasure his father had accumulated, amounting to some two million pounds sterling, as well as some landed estates. The ladies had no real claim either to the money or to the fiefs, and Hastings himself refused to sanction the transfer; but the Directors of the Company gave their sanction. The opposition did not content themselves with thus thwarting Hastings's policy in India: they sent slanders about him to England, and Hastings at last found himself compelled to write to his confidential agents to ask them to use their best endeavours to counteract the effect of this continual calumny. 'There are many

gentlemen in England,' he wrote, 'who have been eye-witnesses of my conduct: for God's sake call upon them to draw my true portrait, for the devil is not so black as these fellows have painted me.'

The opposition now began to look about for other means of annoying their President, and they were not long in finding what they wanted. Some disappointed civil servants and discontented natives now came on the scene and supplied certain information, and gave secret hints, in which the opposing members of Council thought that they detected fraud, corruption, and oppression on the part of Hastings. That unscrupulous Native statesman, the Maharaja Nand Kumar, described by Hastings as 'a wily Brahman, full of plots, treasons, and forgeries', now came forward and laid specific charges of corruption against him. This was an opportunity the Opposition could not neglect of offering Hastings a personal affront. This man was allowed to produce his evidence in person before the Council. Three times did Hastings break up the meeting, rather than submit to the indignity of presiding at his own trial to hear false charges trumped up by such a man against his honour; and three times did the Council continue to receive the charges. Hastings and the one councillor who had supported him all along brought a counter-charge of conspiracy against the man. Hastings also wrote to the Directors of the Company, threatening to resign if he was not supported by them. Meanwhile another native brought a charge of forgery, which at this time was a capital crime, against Nand Kumar. This charge was proved against him, and he was condemned and subsequently hanged. The trial lasted for eight long days in the hot and steamy month of June, and it is no wonder that it is recorded that the judges, who wore their wigs 'had to retire three or four times daily to change their linen'. The House of Commons impugned the action of the Chief Justice, Impey, who was an old schoolfellow of Hastings, in connexion with this trial; but he successfully defended himself, and his perfect impartiality was satisfactorily and completely established. It is of interest to note that Edmund Burke, on the occasion of the great trial of Hastings at a later date, attempted

to revive the matter; but it was held to be irrelevant, and he was publicly reprimanded by the House.

The death, in the autumn of 1776, of one of the members of the opposition, gave Hastings a short respite, which he was not slow to avail himself of. Indeed, his spiteful enemy, Francis, wrote thus of him at this time: 'He is now actually in possession of full power and drives furiously.' Hastings took this opportunity to put revenue matters on a sounder footing; and he improved generally the internal administration of affairs.

Meanwhile, the slanders so industriously sent to England by Francis were working, as such slanders not uncommonly do work, in poisoning men's minds against Hastings: and intrigues were being set on foot for his recall. The Court of Proprietors still, indeed, retained their full confidence in him, but the Court of Directors thought that they detected, under a recent pronouncement of his, views of too imperialistic a character to suit them: Hastings had declared his policy to be 'to make the British nation paramount in India, and to accept the allegiance of such of our neighbours as shall sue to be enlisted among the friends and allies of the King of Great Britain'. Hastings's policy really had for its object the extension of the Company's rule and influence; but the Directors, knowing that Clive had at one time conceived the idea of the Company's possessions in India passing directly under the rule of the Crown, thereby anticipating what it was to take a hundred years to bring about, attributed to Hastings a similar conception. They took advantage of the threat of resignation he had made a short time before, though he had afterwards withdrawn it, and sent out a dispatch accepting his offer of resignation, and empowering one of the members of Council, the Commander-in-Chief, General Clavering, to succeed him.

The General, without waiting for Hastings's formal resignation, demanded the keys of Fort William, and prepared to usurp the functions of Governor-General. Matters would have reached a dead-lock, had it not been for the mutual good sense of the rival claimants for power. They both agreed to stand or fall by the arbitrament of the Supreme Court. That Court gave a judgement in

favour of Hastings, which was somewhat humorously worded. It was ruled that Clavering had acted illegally, 'it being quite evident that Hastings was not dead, that he was not removed, and that he had not resigned.' The death of Clavering soon after solved the difficulty, and the Court of Directors very wisely accepted the position and left Hastings in power. Although the new member of Council, Wheler, supported Francis in his opposition, Hastings could still rely on his old supporter, Barwell; and he usually found the new Commander-in-Chief, Sir Eyre Coote, amenable to reason. Matters were thus rendered somewhat easier for him, and he was able to write: 'A state of great quiet has been produced in our Councils, which I shall endeavour to preserve.' He utilized the opportunity thus afforded of driving the State coach without an unnecessary application of the drag, in putting Home and Foreign affairs upon a more stable footing. In 1777 he had married, as his second wife, the Baroness Von Imhoff, and he then gave up all thoughts of retirement.

It was a fortunate thing for England that he did so, for a grave crisis in the affairs of the British in India had now arrived, and Hastings was practically the only man who could have met it as it was met. A struggle was about to commence in which the very existence of the British in India was at stake. And that they emerged from it, not only triumphant, but recognized as the dominant factor in the politics of the Indian Continent, was due entirely to the resourceful energy, the statesman-like judgement, and the all-daring strength of will of the man, whom one of his biographers has justly designated 'the Saviour of India'. It was against no ordinary foe that Hastings pitted his strength. Three great Powers were practically arrayed against England and her possessions in India. France had allied herself with the revolted English Colonies in America, and was credited with a design of once more making an attempt to establish her ascendancy in India. She had her agents at all the principal Indian Courts, whose mission it was to stir up intrigues against the British, and so prepare the way for her own advance. Some of these Indian Courts had their own grievances, and hardly

needed any persuasion to join in the enterprise, notably the Mahrattas, and Haidar Ali, the Lion of Mysore. These were the other two Powers with whom the British had to reckon. Haidar Ali had publicly expressed his intention of 'driving the English infidels into the sea'. The astute Mahratta Brahman, the Regent of Puna, Nana Farnavis, was negotiating a confederacy between the Mahrattas, the Nizam of Haidarabad, and the Ruler of Mysore, the aim of which was the expulsion of the British from India. How Hastings met the crisis by conciliation where that method was likely to prove efficacious, and by the strong arm where diplomacy failed, is a matter of history. The spirit in which he met it was of itself an augury of success; his determination and resolution never failed him in the hour of the extremest adversity. The maxim he laid down for his guidance is given in his own words: 'Acts that proclaim confidence and a determined spirit in the hour of adversity are the surest means of retrieving it. Self-distrust will only create distrust in others, for in no part of the world is the principle of supporting a rising interest, and depressing a falling one, more prevalent than in India.'

Of some of the more interesting personalities that appear on the scene at this crisis it is sufficient to mention three: the great English General, Sir Eyre Coote, who, with his small force of 8,000 men, attacked and defeated decisively 80,000 of the enemy under the redoubtable Haidar Ali himself; Schwartz, the Danish missionary, who, when the Madras Government, in direct opposition to the counsels and commands of the Governor-General, made peace practically on his own terms with Tipu Sultan, the successor of Haidar, remarked: 'You quit the reins, and how will you manage the beast?' the Bailli de Suffren, the French Admiral, who has been styled the Nelson of France, of whom and the English Naval Commander, Sir Edward Hughes, it was said that 'the fleets commanded by these two great sailors never met without doing each other the utmost damage at the least apparent gain to either side'.

One characteristic incident occurred in connexion with Hastings himself during this period of anxiety. Francis, his bitter opponent in the Council, had pledged himself not to interfere in the conduct of the Mahratta war. Hastings

wished to send a mission to Delhi with the view of checking Mahratta aggression by action in Hindustan. Francis did not consider this to be in the bond: he had had only the Deccan in view, so he objected. This was more than even Hastings's equanimity could stand; and he determined to risk his life in order to settle once for all the question whether he was to rule in the Council or Francis. He framed a charge against Francis, which he knew that Francis could only meet with a challenge. This result followed and a duel ensued, in which Francis was dangerously wounded. It is needless to speculate on what would have been the fate of the British in India had it been Hastings. Eventually Francis went back to England with, as one of Hastings's biographers has written, 'a wounded body and a mind full of revenge.' Hastings thus gave expression to the relief he experienced at the removal of obstruction: 'I have power, and I will employ it to retrieve past misfortunes, to remove present dangers, and to re-establish the power of the Company and the safety of its possessions.'

Hastings had not been neglecting matters of internal administration during this anxious time. By putting the Company's Civil Courts under the control of the Supreme Court, he placed the administration of justice on a better footing, and removed many of the vexations that had been caused by divided control and responsibility. Under this reform the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was appointed President of the Chief Civil Court. The new President drew up a useful code of rules for the guidance of the courts thus placed under his charge. Hastings also devoted some attention to the question of the education of the youth of the country; and he established, largely at his own expense, a Madrasa, or college, in Calcutta, for the special benefit of Muhammadan youth. This institution is still in existence and is doing excellent work. He also founded the Bengal Asiatic Society, which had Sir William Jones as its first president, a man of whom it used to be said that he was the profoundest Oriental scholar of his day, but that he could not make himself understood by his own attendants. In the department of revenuc, finding the Provincial Councils inefficient, and not altogether free

from the suspicion of jobbery, he got rid of them, and established a new Board of Revenue. The members of this Board were sworn to receive no perquisites. In lieu of a fixed salary, they were to be paid by a commission of one per cent. on the net collections. It was Hastings's earnest wish to purify the service, just as it had been his great predecessor, Clive's desire. 'I earnestly desire,' he wrote, 'to bind men to the faithful discharge of their duties by the ties of honour and acknowledgement: to reward each officer according to his proved deserts, and so to unite the interests of the individual with those of the public.' The reform thus brought about was all in the direction of adequate payment for services rendered to the State, of especial importance at a time when fixed salaries barely represented a living wage; and it is recorded that 'it wrought a marked improvement in the moral tone of the Company's servants'.

The historian, Mill, has written thus of Hastings: 'He was placed in difficulties and acted on by temptations such as few public men have been called on to overcome. No man, probably, who ever had a great share in the government of the world had his public conduct so completely explored and laid open to view. If we had the same advantage with respect to other men, few of them would be found whose character would present a higher claim to indulgence than his.' Chief, perhaps, among the acts of Hastings that formed part of the great indictment against him, when, after leaving India, he was placed upon his trial for his conduct of affairs in India, were his dealings with the dependent States of Benares and Oudh. The Raja of Benares, or, as he was then styled, Zamindar, had become a feudatory of the British Government. It had always been a recognized custom of paramount powers in India to claim tribute from their dependent States. Even the manly Rajput princes had paid tribute to the Delhi Empire; and the Mahrattas had always exacted it from their protected States. The British Government had now taken the place of the more or less defunct Mogul Empire, so far as its own dependent States were concerned; it was therefore perfectly natural that the Raja of Benares, a protected feudatory, should pay for the protection

afforded him. He had hitherto paid little, and during the great crisis that the British Government had recently passed through, he had evaded all demands upon him both for financial and for military assistance. Hastings now determined to make an example of him as 'a contumacious vassal', and he demanded payment of fifty lakhs of rupees as a contribution towards the expenses of recent wars. He proceeded in person to Benares to enforce his demand. The Raja met him on the way. Placing his turban on Hastings's knee, he tendered his submission, but Hastings refused to accord him an interview till he had complied with his demands; and he placed him under arrest in his own palace, with a Sepoy guard over him. The Raja managed to escape by letting himself down by a rope made of turbans into a boat. He then placed himself at the head of a considerable army. Hastings himself was in some danger, but he succeeded in extricating himself and his small bodyguard. The Raja was defeated by the British troops, and his last stronghold was captured; he was deposed and a nephew set up in his stead. The Court of Directors passed an adverse vote against Hastings's action. His only reply was: 'Sooner than consent to the Raja's pardon, I will give up my station.' The Court of Proprietors reversed the vote, and the conduct of Hastings was declared to have been 'deserving of every kind of approval and support'.

There was even less cause for finding fault with Hastings's action in the case of Oudh. The Nawab had found himself unable to fulfil his engagements with the British Government: Hastings proffered him the advice which he subsequently took. He resumed the lands handed over to the Begums, and recovered the large sums they had appropriated out of the treasury of the late Nawab. By the law of Islam, as a writer has pointed out, such sums should have been devoted to the exigencies of the State. Hastings had particularly enjoined on the Nawab to use no harsh measures. The Nawab, who had a filial awe for the masterful personality of the Chief Begum, his grandmother, adopted the very mild measure of temporary duress. The Begums, who were proved to have been guilty of complicity with the late Raja of Benares in his

act of rebellion, were liberally pensioned. At a later date Hastings restored to them some of their landed property, and that they felt no resentment is abundantly clear from the letters of commiseration and pity that they sent him when he was afterwards put upon his trial.

During his last year of office, Hastings made a tour to Benares and Oudh, and set reforms on foot for their improved administration. One of the incidents of this tour was the visit he received from the Shah-zada, as the eldest son of the Emperors of Delhi was always styled, Prince Jawan Bakht. His father had sent the prince to ask for the assistance of Hastings. The only advice he could give the prince was to look for protection to the Maharaja Scindia, who had recently invited him to return to Delhi. 'Go to Madhoji Scindia,' he said. One of the strongest claims of Hastings to the title of a great statesman will always be that clear insight with which he recognized the title of that great Mahratta chieftain to the territory he had won by the sword. He thus succeeded in conciliating the most powerful member of the Mahratta Confederacy. Just so he had conciliated another powerful member of that Confederacy, the Bhonsla of Nagpur, by recognizing him as the successor of Sivaji.

Almost the last public act of Hastings was to hold a grand review of the Bengal Army, and to present swords of honour to the officers, and medals and money to the soldiers, British and Indian. Before leaving India for good, he wrote farewell letters to all the chiefs and princes connected with his Government. He received also, as usual with a departing ruler, a number of farewell addresses. Those that he appreciated most, perhaps, were the addresses that came to him, from Europeans and Indians alike, long after his retirement to his native country, and 'long after their recipient', as one of his biographers writes, 'had ceased to hold power, or the prospect of power, all genuine, spontaneous, and relevant.' In February, 1785, Hastings left India for good, after a connexion with the country that had practically lasted for 35 years.

He seems to have had some prescience of the fate that was to befall him soon after his arrival in England. It is recorded that on the voyage home he wrote an apologia

for his administration, in a pamphlet entitled *A Review of the State of Bengal.* In it he had stated his maxim to have been 'to do what I knew was requisite for the public safety, though I should doom my life to legal forfeiture, or my name to infamy'. His first reception in England, however, seemed to augur well. He was everywhere and universally treated, he wrote, 'with evidences that he possessed the good opinion of every one.' But at length the blow fell, a blow which he has himself written 'was to transform an anticipated life of happiness into a life of confiscation, disgrace, and impeachment'.

His enemy, Francis, had been successfully at work; and he had enlisted on his side the great orator, Burke, who himself was in no mood for impartiality, and still less so now that his imagination had been inflamed by the malevolence of Francis. In the month of May, 1787, the House of Commons declared for 'the impeachment of Warren Hastings for high crimes and misdemeanours, at the Bar of the House of Lords'. Not till the month of April, 1795, was this great trial, one of the most memorable in the history of England, to come to an end. Burke did not show himself at his best in the great speech he made on the occasion, which took nine days to deliver, and though not, perhaps, deserving of the scathing language used of it by Lord Ellenborough, the estimate of it formed by Macaulay may, perhaps, be accepted as near the mark: 'Whatever Burke's sagacity descried was refracted and discoloured by his passions and imagination.' The result of the trial was an acquittal by the Lords on every count. During the progress of the trial, Hastings, ever calm amidst the storm, succeeded, to his great joy, in buying back his ancestral seat. Though he had suffered in pocket and in mind, he had his consolation in the letters and addresses of congratulation that poured in upon him from all parts of India, 'from people of all ranks, classes, creeds, and colours.'

Though Hastings never received that parliamentary redress that he sought, even refusing the peerage that was offered him till that redress was given him, which he thought due from the House of Commons for the preliminary judgement they had passed upon his actions,

he received on every side abundant testimony of the universal respect that he was held in. This was, perhaps, shown in its highest form in the spontaneous veneration of the two Houses. He had been called upon to give evidence in connexion with the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813. On entering the House of Commons, he was greeted with applause; and, as he withdrew, the members all rose to their feet, moved as by one common impulse, and stood silent and bareheaded, until he had passed the door. On the following day he received a similar mark of respect from the Lords, being conducted to their house by a prince of the blood. In the same year he received the highest distinction that the University of Oxford has to offer: he had the degree of Doctor of Civil Law conferred upon him. He was received in audience by the Prince Regent, who presented him to the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Prussia, as 'the most deserving and one of the worst used men in the Empire'.

Hastings died at the advanced age of 86. State recognition of his merits took the form of a bust placed in England's hall of worthies, Westminster Abbey. But the recognition that he would, perhaps, have appreciated most was that contained in one of the addresses that came to him from some of his Indian friends in the hour of his great anxiety:—

> 'He was not covetous of other men's money, and was not open to corruption.'

# CHAPTER III

## THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY

### Sir Thomas Munro, 1761–1827.

Thomas Munro was the son of Alexander Munro, a Glasgow merchant, trading with Virginia. He was sent to a grammar school at a very early age, and was only a boy of thirteen when he proceeded to the University, where he remained till he was sixteen. It was at the University that he developed that taste for history and literature that he retained throughout his career in India. His favourite reading consisted of voyages, Plutarch's *Lives*, Shakespeare, political economy, and history. A boy's reading does undoubtedly have an influence on his after career as a man, and so it was with Munro. One illustration of his industry and perseverance may be given : he learnt Spanish with the help of a dictionary and grammar, in order that he might have the pleasure of reading the immortal work of Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, in the original. It is acknowledged by all who take the trouble to learn a new language, and more especially a language that has a great literature, that one of the most interesting results of so doing is the new world that is opened up to the imagination, a result that translations do not achieve to the same extent. The author of this sketch has few more interesting reminiscences than that of reading in the original one of the plays of the great Sanskrit dramatist, Kalidasa, amidst the pine forests of Kashmir, amidst much of the scenery, indeed, in which the action of the play is laid. Munro's athletic tastes in his early youth were a good preparation for his after career in India as both a soldier and an administrator. Nature, it has been said, had given him a personal appearance which inspired confidence, his own training and work supplied the rest. He was tall and robust in appearance, and excelled in all

games and sports, was possessed of great agility, presence of mind, and a high courage; these qualities were combined with great self-denial, which amounted almost to austerity, and great powers of endurance, the natural outcome, no doubt, of his extremely simple habits.

His tastes were all in the direction of a life of adventure, such as a military career offered in the times he was living in; his ambition, however, was not to be gratified till after he had spent some time as a clerk in his father's business firm. He had been offered a commission in the Army, but, out of deference to his father's wishes, he had declined it, though not without a feeling of very deep disappointment. On the failure of his father's business, when he was nineteen years of age, the opportunity came again, and he did not neglect it. He was offered and accepted a military cadetship in the service of the East India Company. He could not afford to pay for a passage out to India, so he worked his way out, as an ordinary seaman, on board ship, thus early showing the stuff he was made of.

He arrived in India in the year 1780. One of his early experiences soon after he had landed was an unpleasant one enough in its consequences. He had engaged a venerable-looking Madrasi as a body-servant; this individual calmly walked off one day with all his wardrobe of European clothes, and with nearly all his available supply of money: he professed to be going to exchange the clothes for something better adapted to the climate. Munro gave a more or less humorous account of the incident in a letter to his mother: "It is customary with gentlemen," said the old man to me, "to make a present of all their European articles to their servants, but I will endeavour to dispose of yours to advantage." Trusting to the old man, whose venerable countenance inspired confidence in his sincerity, I handed them over, and he departed with them. Some unfortunate accident must, however, have happened to him, for he never turned up again.' It is only fair to the Indian servant to say that as a class they are scrupulously honest where things have been specially entrusted to their care: Munro's experience must therefore have been

exceptional. Considering that his pay at this time was only about fifty rupees a month, he must have been put to a great deal of inconvenience by his loss, and he pathetically remarked that it was six months before he could buy fresh linen; but, amidst all his mischances, the saving sense of humour never deserted him.

Munro had not been long in India before the second war with Haidar Ali, of Mysore, broke out. The disunion in the English Council at Madras had given an opening to the enemies of England, and, though an alliance which Haidar Ali had contemplated making, between himself, the Nizam of Haidarabad, and the Mahrattas, had been frustrated by the foresight and sagacity of Warren Hastings, Haidar Ali was confident of a successful issue to the struggle for supremacy between himself and the English, and he had some reason for his confidence, for had he not, some years before, himself dictated terms of peace to the British outside the walls of Madras? Munro was actively employed, but only in a subordinate capacity, throughout the war. His letters and journals throw considerable light on the chief incidents of the war, and contain some masterly criticisms on the conduct of the operations by some of the general officers employed. The strategy opposed to them in the earlier part of the war, by which the enemy succeeded for long in keeping the different units of the British force divided, was a masterly one; one body of troops was completely cut up. However, the English retrieved the disasters of the early part of the war by the brilliant victory of Porto Nuovo. Haidar Ali had given orders before the battle that no prisoners were to be taken, but he was so decisively beaten that he had no chance of taking any. His death in 1782 did not interrupt the war: his son Tipu Sultan carried it on till 1784, when the Treaty of Mangalore brought it to a not altogether successful issue, so far as the English were concerned. Munro's criticism of the last battle of the war, which was fought between an English and a French force, was very severe: 'There seemed no connexion,' he wrote, 'in our movements; every one was at a loss what to do, and nothing saved our army from a total defeat, but the French being, like ourselves, without a general.'

A period of peace ensued, and Munro made excellent use of the enforced leisure which this period gave him. He made a series of walking tours about the country, and thus gained an extensive acquaintance with the Madras Presidency; he also studied Hindustani and Persian. He is said, in the course of his Oriental studies, to have discovered the story of Shylock, the Jew, or at any rate a story very similar, in a Persian manuscript; in its Persian dress it was the story of a Jew and a Muhammadan. It must not be forgotten that Europe is indebted to the East for many of its most familiar and popular fables and tales. To take the story of Gelert, the gallant Welsh hound and the wolf, as one instance, there is a similar story, if it is not, as has been said, the actual original, in Sanskrit story; in its Oriental dress, it is the story of a mungoose and a cobra. In each case the gallant protector of an infant child is slain by the owner under a misapprehension.

During this period of comparative calm the important event took place of the cession to the Company, by the Nizam, of the Guntur Circar, which gave the Company the possession of the East Coast from Jagannath Puri practically down to Cape Comorin: as they had already annexed the Northern Circars, this fresh acquisition of territory gave them the command of an extensive portion of the East Coast. As a matter of fact, it was a restitution rather than a cession, as this region had at one period belonged to the Company. Munro took an important part in this business as an intelligence officer, for which position his acquaintance with the languages of the country well qualified him. It is curious to note that, in some of his letters written at this time, Munro expressed his anticipation of the restoration of French ascendancy in Southern India, anticipations which were fortunately not destined to be realized. France was never able to get that command of the sea on which alone her chances of gaining that ascendancy could have depended. Munro never lost his interest in the history of the world around him, both European and Asiatic, as this correspondence abundantly shows. It is, indeed, very essential for the healthy life of the Englishman in the East that he should maintain this

interest, if he is not to fall behind his contemporaries in the West, and if he is to avoid becoming what has been styled ' a Sultanized Englishman '.

The interest of this portion of Munro's life lies mainly in his descriptions of the life of a subaltern : it was a life of hardships and poverty. The contrast between what people in England dreamt of and the actual reality was a very marked one. The romance of the gorgeous East had doubtless appealed to his youthful imagination, as it does to many a youth in England, till he has found by experience how unromantic life in the East can really be. In Munro's case the contrast between what he had dreamt of and the actual reality had wrought a complete disenchantment. He had, moreover, to endure, what few young men in these days have to suffer from, the difficulty of inadequate means arising from poorness of pay. ' Poverty,' he complained, ' was his constant companion.' It speaks well for his grit that, notwithstanding, he and his brother between them managed to contribute from their small pay a sum of £100 a year, to enable their father to end his days in comparative comfort. His words written to his father on this subject were characteristic of a man one of whose distinguishing traits was filial piety : ' The loss of fortune is but a passing evil ; you are in no danger of experiencing the much heavier one of having unthankful children.' It also speaks well for his character that he did not suffer his disenchantment to extinguish his enthusiasm in his work. This is one of the apparent anomalies of an Eastern career : disenchantment may come earlier or later ; it is bound to come some time ; but enthusiasm may still remain, and when one has finally left the scene of one's labours, the call of the East still occasionally stirs the imagination. Hence the very appropriate name applied to India by Sir Alfred Lyall, ' the Land of Regrets.' Munro kept up his deep interest in his surroundings, and some of the special interest of his correspondence at this time lies in the glimpses it gives of his walks and talks with the people of the country ; he could always adapt himself to his environment, and the main secret of this was his intimate acquaintance with the colloquial vernacular.

Not many years after the conclusion of peace with the Ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, the English again found themselves at war with him. The cause of this, the Third Mysore War, was Tipu Sultan's invasion of the territory of the Raja of Travancore, who was an ally of the English. Munro was actively engaged in this war, but again in the capacity of a subaltern only. The unpreparedness of the English was as conspicuous on this occasion as it had been on the outbreak of the previous war, and again they narrowly escaped defeat in the earlier part of the campaign. The faulty strategy of the English commanders placed Tipu in a superior position on more occasions than one, and it was fortunate for the English that he failed to take advantage of it. Munro noted this fact, and commented on it thus: 'There seems to be a fatality sometimes attending even the greatest geniuses, which deadens the energy of their minds, and reduces them to the level of common men just when their best concerted schemes are about to be crowned with success.' A certain incident happened during this period of Munro's career which brings out conspicuously his dislike of anything approaching self-advertisement, even when there was a good prospect of its advancing his interests. His relatives at home had published in *The Times* a graphic description of the war, which he had sent them; this led him to destroy a very interesting manuscript, in the shape of a long treatise on the war. He remarked, as he did so, that there was no use in keeping it, when he could not venture to send it to those for whose amusement it was intended. This war with Tipu Sultan was brought to a close with the Treaty of Seringapatam, in 1792. Munro would have liked to have seen the war carried to a final issue, of which there seemed every prospect at the time that peace was concluded. It was known that Tipu considered affairs so critical, the British army lying all round his capital, that he was preparing for instantaneous flight, remaining outside the fort in a tent among his horsemen. The Treaty caused great disappointment also in the army generally: its terms were thought to be far too easy. Lord Cornwallis is reported to have been unwilling to capture the capital, and to have remarked: 'Good God, what shall I do with

the place.' Be this as it may, Munro thought that the policy of conciliation was unsuited to the times, and to the man whom Lord Cornwallis was attempting to conciliate, and he by no means stood alone in holding this opinion. He somewhat caustically remarked: 'Everything is now done by moderation and conciliation; at this rate we shall all be Quakers twenty years hence.' The policy in favour at the time was the maintenance of a balance of power, whereas Munro thought that conquest was the policy best suited to the times, and the only policy likely to secure permanent security. The soundness of these views was proved by after events: within the short period of seven years the Fourth Mysore War had to be undertaken by the Marquis Wellesley. Tipu Sultan during this interval was busy concerting measures for the overthrow of the English power in India. He sent a mission to Constantinople, another to Zaman Shah, in Afghanistan, and another to Napoleon Buonaparte. In order to win over the Sultan of Turkey to his side, he had announced himself as 'the Champion of Islam against the Kafirs'.

By the terms of the Treaty that brought the Third Mysore War to a close, Tipu lost half his dominions; they were divided between the British, the Nizam of Haidarabad, and the Mahrattas. The British share consisted of the regions known as Malabar, Dindigul, part of the present district of Madura, and the Bara-Mahal, part of the present district of Salem. The assistant-superintendentship of the latter was given to Munro, and his service lasted for some seven years. The natural beauties of this district, which have been noted by all travellers, appealed to Munro's love of natural scenery, and he was able to give full scope to his taste for gardening. A short time back attempts were made to locate the garden that Munro made for himself near Dharmapuri, in which he used always to spend at least an hour every day. Unfortunately, these attempts were unsuccessful. When his time to leave the district came, he said that to quit it gave him as much regret as forsaking an old friend. He left memorials of himself all over the district in the shape of tanks, rest-houses, and avenues of roadside trees. The literatures of the East attribute great merit to rulers who provide for their people

things so necessary to the comfort of travellers in the East, as water, shelter, and shade. Had Munro been a Hindu, he would have been storing up merit for the next world; as it was, he left behind him a kindly place in the hearts of the people of the district, and to this day his memory is handed down as that of Tom Munro Bahadur, 'the Ryots' Friend.'

His chief work was in the direction of revenue reforms: the old oppressive system whereby the revenue was collected by the Zamindars, who farmed out the land, was abolished in favour of what is known as the Ryotwari system, a system which was afterwards extended over the Madras Presidency. Under this system, the Ryot is considered as practically a peasant-proprietor, paying revenue direct to Government. Munro always carried into practice, during this period of what he has described as a time of plain hard labour, his own theory of what constitutes the duty of an administrator, of seeing things with his own eyes; he was always personally most active in the matter of touring, and he utilized to the full his practical knowledge of colloquial vernacular, a knowledge which he always regarded as a very important equipment for officers of Government. In some of his correspondence at this period, he touched on one important matter, a matter which afterwards did receive the closest attention from the Government, the necessity of giving Government officers good pay for the work to be done. 'Even men of education and character,' he wrote, 'when placed in situations where they cannot become independent by their regular pay, if it is small, are tempted to hasten the period of their independence by dishonest means, where they can without danger of discovery. It is only ignorance of human nature for Government to ignore that fact.' In the present day that temptation no longer exists: the pay is in most cases commensurate with the work. The efforts of successive Rulers of India to secure the purity of the administration have been rewarded; so that now, in the present day, the encomium passed on the services, civil and military, by the late Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, that they are 'the highest-minded services in the world', is recognized by all who know India best, as no more than

the bare truth. All Indian administrators recognize the expediency of giving free access to their presence to all visitors, of keeping, as it is styled in Oriental parlance, 'Char darwaze khole,' 'four doors open;' but all at the same time recognize it as a great tax upon their time. Munro has some amusing remarks in his correspondence on this practice, which at the same time he always recognized as part of the day's work: 'I wonder we waste so much time in praying against battle, and murder, and sudden death, which seldom happen, instead of calling upon Heaven to deliver us from the calamity we are daily exposed to, of troublesome visitors; they have frequently given me a headache, and I would rather walk all day in a hot sun than sit listening to a dull fellow. I wish they would all come and see me in the mass and not singly.'

This period of Munro's civil administration was interrupted for a time by the Fourth Mysore War, already alluded to, in which he was called upon to take a part, this time as captain of a transport and commissariat corps. At the close of the war, which ended in the final conquest of Mysore, Munro was appointed secretary to the commission that was nominated to arrange about the disposal of the country. One of the districts that came at this time under British administration, under the terms of the new Partition Treaty made between the British, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas, was the district of Canara. Munro was placed in administrative charge of it, and remained so for about a year. The words in which he expressed his regret at leaving the scene of his old labours, the district of Salem, mark the enthusiast: 'I have now turned my back on the Bara-Mahal and the Karnatic, with a deeper sense of regret than I felt on leaving home. I see nothing in the future to compensate me for what I have lost, a country and friends that have been endeared to me by the residence of twenty years.' His sense of public duty and the nearer prospects of leave home were his principal reasons for accepting the post offered him by the Governor-General. At the same time he found the new life and work in Canara exceedingly irksome, and he made an attempt to get a transfer. This called forth from his superior officer a striking tribute to the unique character

of his work: 'I regret,' wrote Mr. Cockburn, the senior member of the Board of Revenue, 'that your situation should be so irksome, the more so as any attempt to procure your removal would be considered treason to the State, your services are so esteemed, and there is no one equal to the performance of the difficult task you are engaged in.'

His chief work in this district lay in settlement operations and in the suppression of crime. He was in the habit of keeping a journal, and the entries in this give an insight into the heavy nature of the task he was engaged in. One entry will suffice to show this: 'In one year, I have gone through more work than in almost all the seven years I was in the Bara-Mahal.' His life was spent almost entirely in tents. The crowds that used to throng his tent, not leaving him very often till near midnight, gave him a good insight into the character of the people. Grumbling is an ineradicable attribute of the agricultural classes all the world over, whatever the seasons may bring, and the cultivators of Canara were no exception to the rule. Silence on their part was by no means regarded as golden, on the contrary it would imply an acknowledgement on their part that they could well afford to pay enhanced rents: hence their vociferous clamours, whenever Munro appeared amongst them, of hard times and poverty. This, with the Indian cultivator, Munro in his journal notes, was by no means lying, but only an Oriental evasion of the truth, a habit formed as the result of many centuries of oppression under hard task-masters, and one not to be easily eradicated even under a milder régime. 'The old system,' noted Munro, 'of always prying into their affairs in order to lay ever new burdens upon them, forced them to deny what they had in order to save their property at all, and, after all, concealment of the real facts, and exaggeration of losses are characteristic of the class.' He gives an amusing instance of this tendency to exaggeration which he observed even in the younger generation of cultivators: he one day asked the youthful son of a cultivator who had been set to frighten birds off the crops with the primitive sling and stones, still to be seen in the fields of the East, 'How many bushels of grain do you expect?' The boy simply replied: 'There is nothing in our house now to eat: the

birds will eat all this, and we shall be starved.' It has been sometimes argued that Government measures of relief have in these latter days, in times of famine, had the effect of demoralizing the agricultural classes, but this is not really so : their characteristics have not altered materially for centuries, and they remain much the same under the benevolent despotism of British rulers as they were under the harsher rule of despotic task-masters : and the old Sanskrit Proverb that runs : 'Speech benefits a Brahman more than silence,' is as applicable now to the Indian cultivator when he thinks that speech will help him to get his rents lowered, or altogether remitted, as ever it was. As usual with him, Munro availed himself to the full of the opportunities the settlement operations gave him of walks and talks with the people of the district : he also indulged his love of Nature, humorously remarking : 'Notwithstanding the want of music and damsels, I love to rise before the sun, and prick my steed through the woods and wilds under a serene sky.'

Munro's good work in Canara at last met with its reward in a more important appointment being conferred upon him. There were certain districts which had been originally granted to the Nizam after the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars, which had at a later period been ceded by him to the British as a guarantee for the payment of the cost of subsidiary troops. Munro was placed in charge of these districts. The Governor of Madras, Lord Clive, offered the appointment to Munro in most complimentary terms : Munro had in the first instance asked for it, and Lord Clive wrote : 'The wishes of so excellent a fellow and collector ought to be cheerfully complied with.'

The first step in the settlement of the new districts, of which Bellary and Cuddapah were the chief, was the subjection of the petty chiefs of those parts, who were known as Naiks, or Polygars, and their armed followers, whose numbers amounted to some 30,000, and who all subsisted by violence and plunder. In describing his work as collector, Munro thus wrote : 'My annual circuit is near a thousand miles, and the hours I spend on horseback are almost the only hours I spend alone.' He never travelled with a guard even in disturbed districts, for,

as he remarked, nothing short of a company would give protection. He trusted entirely to the prestige of his office as collector, recognizing that this prestige with the people of India, with all their respect for authority, is really very great. 'The natives of India,' he remarked on one occasion, 'have a good deal of respect for public authority: collectors, they consider, only act by orders from superior powers: they ought not, therefore, to become objects of resentment.' Times have changed a good deal since these words were penned, but one has only to associate freely with all classes of Indians to realize that, even in these days, the prestige of the higher Government officials, and especially of the District Officer, is as great as it ever was, with the great body of the people. Munro's first land settlement was a village one: under this system each village was treated as a separate community, and assessed as a whole; the cultivators as a body were made responsible for the payment of the amount due. His next settlement was a step towards the Ryotwari system already referred to: under this system a settlement was made with the cultivators individually; the head-men of the villages were at the same time made responsible for defaulters, or absconders. Munro's Survey Settlement was a very thorough piece of work; so much so, indeed, that to this day it is said to be a safe guide in most village disputes. The Board of Revenue used to insist on their officers keeping a diary, which they were called upon to submit periodically; Munro's comment upon this was somewhat caustic: 'I cannot see what purpose it would answer here except to hinder me from looking after more important matters.'

Englishmen in India in these days enjoy much greater opportunities of relaxation than Englishmen of Munro's days enjoyed, and Munro during this period of hard work complained deeply of the want of it: he recognized that work can only be carried on vigorously, and without a jaded feeling, where relaxation was possible. One of the most curious anomalies of the present day is the harsh criticism that is so often passed upon their countrymen in India, who are engaged in doing their country's work, by men who have themselves held official position in India,

and who may be supposed to know something of the conditions under which that work is done, whereas much of their criticism goes to show their actual ignorance. The possible explanation may be found to be in the different points of view from which men of this class have viewed things while in India. Men belonging to one class of these critics have gone about with a veil of visionary idealism over their eyes which has prevented their seeing things as they actually are: men of another class have moved chiefly in great cities, and men living in cities know nothing of the life of the country at large: they have no real idea of the conditions under which Englishmen carry on their work in the Mufasal, as the country districts of India are styled. All this goes to show the danger of dogmatizing in matters concerned with the conduct of Englishmen or the feelings of Indians. A recent critic has alleged against the relaxations of the modern Englishman in India that they are frivolous, and that this frivolity is causing loss of prestige among his more serious-minded Indian fellow subjects. Now, 'coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt': an Englishman does not lose his characteristics even when his work does lie East of Suez, and the only difference between him and his countryman at home, who has besides many more interests to absorb his attention, is perhaps the extra zest with which he throws himself into his amusements. No one who realizes the actual conditions under which the average official carries on his duties in the Mufasal, devoting his best hours and his best thoughts, during his long working hours, to the interests of the people entrusted to his charge, will grudge him his well won play-hours, or be surprised if he enjoys them with all the zest and enthusiasm almost of a schoolboy. In all that concerns the real business of life the Englishman in India can be serious enough, but relaxation is his very life: it is, indeed, the only thing that helps to preserve the balance of his moral and physical well-being, and saves him from becoming that degenerate and Orientalized hybrid immortalized by Thackeray. Without his relaxation and the renewed energy that it gives him for work, he would indeed be in danger of losing his prestige. He is ever ready, moreover,

to welcome at his out-door sports and pastimes his Indian friends who may show sufficient skill to join him. As a matter of fact the Indian whose opinion is most worth having, if he thinks at all about the matter, which is exceedingly doubtful, certainly does not think the less of him for enjoying his hours of relaxation in a manner characteristic of his race. After all, 'East is East, and West is West.' Relaxation so necessary for the Englishman, may not be so necessary for the Indian: each has the traditions of his race: the Englishman has his, and the Indian has his, and both cannot help being themselves.

During this period of his career, Munro was able to render valuable assistance to Arthur Wellesley, his life-long friendship with whom had dated from the time when he had been secretary to the commission for disposing of Mysore territory after the death of Tipu. He supplied the transport that was needed during the Mahratta campaign of 1802. Arthur Wellesley fully recognized Munro's military skill and sagacity, and was always glad to have his opinion on military matters, regarding him as a good judge of a military operation.

The Sepoy Mutiny of Vellore, which occurred towards the end of this portion of Munro's career, produced some correspondence between him and Lord William Bentinck, who at the time was Governor of Madras. Bentinck had attributed the mutiny to intrigues among Tipu's sons: Munro, on the other hand, conceived that the proximate cause was religious disquietude, induced by certain vexatious military regulations. This will generally be found to be at the bottom of every disturbance of the masses in India, who are so intensely credulous, and whose minds are very easily worked upon by the cry that those who wish to incite rebellion generally raise first: 'Your religion is in danger.' Such a cry once set in motion will affect even the more intelligent natives of India. In no country in the world does rumour, and especially false rumour, run more swiftly. A recent Governor of Madras, Lord Ampthill, once appositely said, 'A slander runs twice round the world while Truth is putting on her boots.' A report once started is universally believed. It was not an ignorant native, but a high-caste and loyal native

officer, who, at the time of the great Mutiny, speaking of the general belief that the Government wished to take away the caste of the people, remarked in perfect sincerity: 'What everybody is saying must be true.' Munro wrote to his father an account of the affair at Vellore, and quoted some of the regulations that had caused such offence: 'Caste marks and earrings on parade were forbidden; shaving was ordered; the shape of the hair on the upper lip was to be regulated, and a specially-shaped turban was ordered to be worn.' These orders to an Englishman would appear trifling enough, and perhaps even a subject for ridicule, but, to an orthodox Hindu, they would be disturbing in the highest degree to his religious prejudices.

An interval of rest for Munro was now to follow: he had been absent from home for twenty-seven years, and was now forty-six years of age. His decision to take furlough called forth a well-deserved eulogy of his work in the ceded districts from the Madras Government. The dispatch that went to the Court of Directors referred to Munro's 'exertions in the advancement of the public service under circumstances of success unparalleled in the records of this, or probably of any other Government'. Munro's correspondence at this time expresses his mixed feelings: pleasure at the idea of going home was mingled with regret at leaving India. He anticipated, however, a speedy return to India, and, naturally, after his successful career he was ambitious to obtain a higher sphere of action. In one of his letters he wrote: 'I am not satisfied with the subordinate line in which I have moved, and with my having been kept from holding any distinguished military command by want of rank; I shall never be able to sit down quietly to enjoy private life, and I shall probably return to India, in quest of what I may never obtain.'

As a matter of fact, he remained in England for a period of seven years, much longer than he had ever anticipated, but he was not idle during this enforced period of leisure from official duties; for one thing, he took up the study of chemistry. The study of science has often beguiled the leisure hours of great statesmen: the late Marquis of Salisbury, one of England's most distinguished premiers, spent many of his leisure hours in his laboratory. Munro

was also consulted by the Court of Directors in connexion with the subject of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813; his services on the occasion have been thus recorded: 'Among all those whose opinions were sought on that occasion, Colonel Munro made the deepest impression upon the House by the comprehensiveness of his views, by the promptitude and intelligibility of his answers, and by the judgement and sound discretion which characterized every sentiment to which he gave utterance.' The Court of Directors recognized his services by giving him the appointment of President of a special Commission to inquire into and reform the judicial system in the Presidencies of Bengal and Madras.

Munro returned to India again in the year 1814: it seems strange in these days of quick locomotion to read his description of his voyage out as 'a quick voyage of sixteen weeks'. He had married just before returning to India, and not unnaturally, after his long period of bachelorhood, he found the etiquette of paying and returning visits that his marriage involved somewhat uncongenial and irksome, but he accepted the position as one of the necessary responsibilities of his new state. He found it hard to work with the Madras Government at first, owing to the divided counsels that prevailed, a not unusual characteristic apparently of the Madras Government in these early days of British rule. In his usual shrewd and masterful way he wrote to the India Board suggesting that they should write out 'we order' or 'we direct', in place of the usual formula 'we wish', or 'we propose'.

Notwithstanding the opposition he had to encounter in the course of his work on the Judicial Commission, the new regulations framed by that Commission were eventually passed into law; Munro's share of the task has been thus recorded: 'They are a monument not only of Munro's force of character in accomplishing his object against the most powerful opposition, but of his high administrative ability and statesmanlike views.' The changes made were all in the direction of a more efficient, and at the same time, a simpler system of administration. Thus the superintendence of the police, and the functions of the district magistrate were transferred from the judge to the collector.

Hereditary village officials were to be employed mainly as police. A system of Village and District Panchayats, as the simple village Tribunals, or Courts of Arbitration, are styled, was legalized, and power was even given to selected head-men of villages to hear suits. Munro attached great importance to the Panchayats, as being adapted to native habits and usages.

On the completion of this work, Munro expressed his keen desire for military employment: he was essentially a soldier first, and a statesman afterwards. Operations had commenced against the Mahrattas and the Pindaris, and Munro had asked for the command of the subsidiary forces of Haidarabad and Nagpur. His wish, however, was not to be at once gratified, and the only reply he received was his appointment to the commissionership of the Southern Mahratta country, which had been recently ceded by the Peshwa. This was a purely civil appointment, and Munro could not refrain from expressing his annoyance in these terms: 'I regret deeply to feel for the first time the army in advance shut against me.' At the same time he accepted the situation loyally.

His patience was at last rewarded, and he was given a command as brigadier of the division of the army detailed to reduce the Southern Mahratta country. The confidence and goodwill of the people which he had won during the short period of his civil administration was now to stand him in good stead. He had already, in correspondence with the Marquis of Hastings, given his theory as to the best way of dealing with predatory hordes, such as the Pindaris, which was, 'to carry the war into the enemy's country': he now proceeded to put this theory into practice by occupying the districts these hordes were wont to assemble in. His plan of procedure was, while reducing their strongholds, to simultaneously issue conciliatory proclamations to the people: he thus kept the enemy fully employed in the defence of their own possessions. The people of the territories he thus invaded had such confidence in him that they actually assisted in driving out their own masters, and in collecting the revenue for the British. The strongholds of the enemy were all taken possession of by his Irregulars in the name of

'Thomas Munro, Bahadur'. Sir John Malcolm, writing of the modus operandi of Munro, summed up his qualities in the telling phrase, 'a master-workman.' As usual his correspondence was full of humorous descriptions of men and things: in one of his letters he drew a contrast between the Mahratta freebooter and the Highland cateran, Rob Roy. 'The difference between the two,' he wrote, 'is that the one does from choice what the other did from necessity: for a Mahratta would rather get ten pounds by plunder than one hundred pounds by an honest calling.'

Munro was now again compelled to take furlough to England: his incessant labours had injured his eyesight. He remained at home for about a year. He found honours awaiting him this time, as his fame had preceded him. Mr. George Canning, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Army, after the termination of the Mahratta War, thus alluded to his services: 'Than Colonel Thomas Munro, Europe never produced a more accomplished statesman, and India, so fertile in heroes, a more skilful soldier.' He was promoted to the rank of Major-General; and, on receiving the appointment of the Governorship of Madras, was created a Knight Commander of the Bath. Mr. Canning, in mentioning his name to the Court of Directors, spoke of the usual practice of appointing men of eminence in England to the Indian Governorships, but he added that three men had so distinguished themselves in India that it was determined to offer them these high posts: the three were Malcolm, Elphinstone, and Munro. At the banquet given in Munro's honour, before he left England, and at which, among other distinguished men, his old friend, the Duke of Wellington, was present, Mr. Canning again paid a remarkable tribute to him: 'We bewilder ourselves,' he said, 'in this part of the world with opinions respecting the sources from which power is derived; some suppose it to arise with the people themselves, while others entertain a different view; all, however, are agreed that it should be exercised for the people; if ever an appointment took place to which this might be ascribed as the distinguishing motive, it is that which we have now come together to celebrate.' Munro, writing to a friend, said

of this speech, 'It is worth while to be a Governor to be spoken of in such a manner by such a man.'

The leading principles of Munro's administration as Governor are given in a letter he wrote to Mr. Canning: 'The relief of the people from novel and oppressive modes of judicial process, the improvement of internal administration by the employment of Europeans and Indians in those duties for which they are respectively best suited, and the strengthening of the attachment of Indians to our Government by maintaining their ancient institutions and usages.' He continually urged the wider employment of Indians in the higher administrative charges, as the one necessary condition of an improvement in their moral character: he thus prepared the way for the reforms which were afterwards inaugurated by Lord William Bentinck in this direction. He saw the benefits that would accrue from the introduction of a general system of education amongst the people, and he wrote thus on the subject: 'Whatever expense Government may incur in the education of the people will be amply repaid by the improvement of the country, for the general diffusion of knowledge is inseparably followed by more orderly habits, by increasing industry, by a taste for the comforts of life, by exertions to acquire them, and by the growing prosperity of the people.' His views, moreover, of the lines on which the higher education of the people should proceed, were very sound: 'A knowledge of their own literature,' he held, 'should be extended among them side by side with the language and literature of England.' It was, indeed, on these lines that the Government at a later period, as seen in the dispatch of Sir Charles Wood in 1854, contemplated that higher education in India should proceed; it is unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, that, as time went on, this view was lost sight of, and the Indian vernaculars were practically ignored. It was left to the late Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, to endeavour to bring education in India back on to the right track again, by insisting on greater prominence being given to the languages and literatures of India. Munro always upheld the sound policy of religious neutrality for officers of Government; this is shown by the rebuke he gave to a sub-collector of one of

the districts of his Province, who had been displaying an excess of religious zeal, which had led him to transgress the rules of religious neutrality: 'The best way for a collector,' he wrote to this man, 'to instruct the natives is to set them an example in his own conduct: to try to settle their disputes with each other, and to prevent their going to law: to bear patiently all their complaints against himself and his servants, and bad seasons, and to afford them all the relief in his power, and, if he can do nothing more, to give them at least good words.'

The first Burmese War occurred during Munro's tenure of office, and he was able to be of material assistance to the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, chiefly in facilitating the dispatch of troops and material. His long experience, moreover, of Indian warfare, and knowledge of Asiatic character, enabled him to be a wise counsellor. He received a very handsome acknowledgement from the Governor-General in Council for his services, as well as the thanks of the Court of Directors; Lord Goderich, in the House of Lords, declared that 'it was impossible for any one to form an adequate idea of the efforts made by Sir Thomas Munro, at the head of the Madras Government, to further the successful issue of the campaign.'

Munro kept up his old habit of living in tents whenever he went on the district tours he was so fond of, and which he valued as the best means of obtaining that intimate acquaintance with the people so essential for an administrator. The difficulties of touring in his days were far greater than they are in these days of better communications; but, in some of the more backward Provinces, many of these difficulties still remain. In this way, he managed to renew his old acquaintance with the districts of the Bara-Mahal, and the ceded districts. Writing of one of these districts, Cuddapah, he said: 'I still like this country, notwithstanding its heat; it is full of industrious cultivators, and I like to recognize among them a great number of my old acquaintances, who, I hope, are as glad to see me, as I them.' In 1826, Munro had applied to be relieved of his office, but as some delay occurred in the appointment of his successor, he set out for a farewell tour in the ceded districts. There is a legend still surviving

in connexion with this last tour of his. He was marching among the hills in the Cuddapah district, when he suddenly looked up at the steep cliffs above him, and remarked: 'What a beautiful garland of flowers they have stretched across the valley!' His companions all looked up, but could see nothing: 'Why, there it is,' he again remarked, 'all made of gold.' Again they looked up and saw nothing: thereupon one of his old servants exclaimed: 'Alas, master! A great and good man will soon die.' Very shortly after this, Munro was attacked with cholera, and though it was at first hoped that he would recover, it was not to be: he died the same evening. His sweetness of temper was never more conspicuously displayed than during his last illness: during one of the rallies, he exclaimed, in a tone of peculiar sweetness, 'It is almost worth while to be ill to be so kindly nursed.' Among those near him at the time of his death was the future famous missionary and Tamil scholar, Henry Bower, then a boy. Munro passed away calmly on the night of July 6, 1827, at the age of sixty-six.

In the *Gazette Extraordinary* issued by the Government of India, this tribute was paid to his memory: 'His sound and vigorous understanding, his transcendent talents, his indefatigable application, his varied stores of knowledge, his attainments as an Oriental scholar, his intimate acquaintance with the habits and feelings of the native soldiers and inhabitants generally, his patience, temper, facility of access, and kindness of manner, would have ensured him distinction in any line of employment. These qualities were admirably adapted to the duties which he had to perform in organizing the resources, and establishing the tranquillity of those Provinces, where his latest breath has been drawn, and where he had long been known by the appellation of "The Father of the People".'

At a public meeting held in Madras to concert measures to perpetuate his memory, his death was spoken of as a public calamity; one of the speakers at the meeting said: 'His justice, benevolence, frankness, and hospitality were no less conspicuous than the extraordinary faculties of his mind.' Various memorials in his memory were erected throughout his territory: a grove of trees was planted, and

a well dug, near the place where he died ; a similar well and a rest-house were constructed at Gooty, where for several years food was distributed gratuitously in his honour ; but his best memorial lay in the affections of his people.

Munro was pre-eminently the soldier-statesman : his military qualities were recognized by so great a master of the art of war as the Duke of Wellington, his administrative qualities were even greater. His most distinguishing characteristic, perhaps, was his modesty and unassuming nature. For nearly twenty-eight years without a break, during his first spell of service, he had worked in silence, adopting as his motto the noble lines of the blind patriot bard of England, John Milton :—

> To know
> That which before us lies in daily life
> Is the prime wisdom : what is more is fume,
> Or emptiness, or fond impertinence :
> And renders us in things that most concern,
> Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.

Mr. George Canning, in the course of that magnificent eulogy on Munro already referred to, thus noted this great characteristic : 'Apart from the public eye, and without the opportunities of early special notice, was employed a man whose name I should be sorry to pass over in silence.' The greater portion of his work was done in silence, but history has provided that his memory shall not be held in silence, and Lord Dalhousie, in some correspondence he once had with Sir Henry Lawrence, was able to say in proof of this assertion : 'All the world unites in acknowledging the talents and merits of Sir Thomas Munro.'

The legend, still current in his old Presidency, of an incident that occurred on his last tour has been referred to, and how his old retainer had interpreted the sign to mean that a great and good man was about to die : this was a true forecast : a great and good man passed away in the person of Sir Thomas Munro.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE SOLDIER, THE DIPLOMATIST, THE STATESMAN, THE ADMINISTRATOR

### SIR JOHN MALCOLM, 1769–1833.

JOHN MALCOLM was born in Scotland, and it is of interest to note that the Great Duke, who was destined to become one of his greatest friends, was born in the same month and the same year, and almost on the same day. He was an active-minded boy and full of innocent mischief while at school; and it is recorded that, whenever anything mischievous out of the common occurred, the head master used to say, 'Ah! Jock's at the bottom of it.' In after years, when Malcolm had become a distinguished man, he sent his old schoolmaster a copy of his *History of Persia*, with 'Jock's at the bottom of it', written on the title-page.

In order to qualify for a cadetship in the East India Company's service, which he was anxious to get, he had to appear before the Board of Directors at the early age of twelve. This was the usual procedure in those days, just as in these, candidates for a cadetship in the Royal Navy have to appear before a special Board of Naval Officers. This system of inspection of candidates has many advantages. Personality may begin to stamp itself on the features at an early age: a boy wears no mask and his face is often an index to his character. A judge of character, therefore, may often in this way get some idea of a boy's pregnant capacity, and the boy, for his part, has some chance of showing some side of himself which reveals latent characteristics that may appeal to his judges. Thus John Malcolm's bearing made a very favourable impression on the Board. One of the members of the Board put this question to him: 'My little man, what would you do, if you were to meet Haidar Ali?' 'Do,' replied the boy, nothing daunted, 'I would out with my sword,

and cut off his head.' The Directors were delighted and at once passed him as a cadet. He was too young to be sent out to India at once, and so was sent to school for another year or so. He was only fourteen when he eventually proceeded to India. In the following year, fifteen was fixed as the minimum age for entrance into the Company's military service.

When he first arrived in India war was in progress, not only between the English and the French, but also between the English and Tipu Sultan, the Ruler of Mysore. He was too young to be sent on active service. The war with the French ceased soon after his arrival: and the war with Tipu was brought to a conclusion the year after. An exchange of prisoners had been arranged for, and Malcolm, young as he was, was entrusted with the mission. An amusing story is related relative to this: 'The British officer, a Major Dallas, who was deputed to escort the prisoners out of Tipu's territories, and to hand them over to the British detachment sent to the frontier, seeing a slight rosy healthy-looking English boy astride on a rough pony, with some English troops, asked him for his commanding officer. "I am the commanding officer," said the boy, drawing himself up in the saddle. The Major smiled: the boy was John Malcolm.' He was only fifteen at the time: he and the Major became life-long friends. Like many other youngsters on first arriving in India, John Malcolm was not long in getting into debt: in these early days there was some excuse for this, as pay was so small. In Bengal there was an expression in common use to illustrate the extent to which some young civilians used to become involved: it used to be said of such a one, 'He has turned his lakh.' John Malcolm, fortunately for himself, did not get very heavily involved, and having once got in, he determined to get out again, and eventually he managed to do so, though as he said he had to stint and starve himself. A story has been told to illustrate the hardships he suffered while thus extricating himself: 'An old native woman in the regimental bazaar, taking compassion upon his youth, implored him to receive supplies from her, to be paid for at his convenience. He was for ever grateful for this act of kindness and humanity, and in

after years he settled a pension on her for the rest of her life.

On war again breaking out with Tipu, an opportunity came to Malcolm of seeing active service. His regiment was ordered to co-operate with the troops of the Nizam of Haidarabad. This proved to be the turning-point in his career. His biographer has recorded how his meeting with some celebrated political officers in the Nizam's camp caused a new ambition to stir within him. He made up his mind he also would become a great political. He was now a man of twenty-one, and was noted as a crack shot, and a gymnast: he was always so active and fond of sport that the sobriquet 'Boy Malcolm', given him in his youth, stuck to him till late in life, even after he had become a distinguished public servant. Up to this time he had been regarded as 'a careless, good-humoured fellow, illiterate, but with pregnant ability'. And, considering that he had entered on the active business of life at an age when most boys are at school, it was no reproach to him to be styled so: but he was soon to remove the stigma of illiteracy, and his pregnant ability was soon to manifest itself to the world in the field of thought, as it had already begun to do in the field of action. He no longer confined his attention to physical exercises, but began seriously to devote himself to study. He took steps to acquire the native languages, and especially a knowledge of the courtly Persian, acquaintance with which is to this day a passport to influence at many an Oriental court. It was, indeed, his speaking acquaintance with Persian that made the visits of the diplomatist, Earl Dufferin, so welcome to Indian princes. Malcolm also applied himself to the study of Indian history. The philosopher, Bacon, has remarked in one of his essays on worldly wisdom: 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.' Much conference with the world of books had made of Malcolm a full man: much writing had made him an exact man: reading and writing ever went hand in hand with him, and he ever wrote with a ready pen. He would record on paper his meditations on the principles on which the great Indian Empire has been ever administered, by the observance of which it was founded and on

which alone it can be maintained; and his observations have ever been regarded as most sound. His biographer gives an account of Malcolm's exceeding keenness to obtain a political appointment, and of his great disappointment when he one day only missed getting such an appointment by being only half an hour too late in his application: 'He went back to his tent, flung himself down on his couch, and gave way to a flood of tears. But he lived, as many a man before and since has lived, to see in his first crushing miscarriage the crowning mercy of his life. The officer who carried off the prize so coveted by him was murdered on his first appearance at the native court to which he had been accredited. This made a deep impression on Malcolm's mind, and was ever after gratefully remembered. He often spoke of it in later days as an illustration of the little that man knows of what is really for his good, and he taught others, as he himself had learnt, "never to repine at the accidents and mischances of life, but to see in all the hand of an all-merciful Providence, working benignly for our good."'

His opportunity arrived at last: he was appointed Persian interpreter to a detachment of the British army serving with the Nizam at Seringapatam. He wrote that Lord Cornwallis had appointed him 'because he considered him the officer with that corps best qualified for the station'. At this crisis in his career his health unfortunately failed, and he had to seek health again in England. He returned to India as military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, and he retained this office under General Clarke's successor, General Harris, who was also for a time Governor of Madras. He was holding the appointment of Town-Major of Madras when an opportunity presented itself to him which he was not slow to avail himself of. The new Governor-General, Lord Mornington, afterwards the Marquis Wellesley, touched at Madras on his way to take up his appointment in Calcutta. John Malcolm was introduced to him: in the course of his historical studies, Malcolm had drafted certain reports on British relations with the Native States, and especially with the State of Haidarabad: he sent these to the Governor-General. His reward was an appointment as

assistant to the Resident at the court of the Nizam. He had now obtained what he had long coveted, definite employment in the political department. He was, moreover, fortunate in receiving a mission, the successful issue to which was to prove his capacity. A strong body of troops in the Nizam's service was officered by Frenchmen, who had French revolutionary colours, and wore French revolutionary symbols on their uniforms. This corps was to be disbanded, and it was Malcolm's business to effect this. The story is thus told : ' The Sepoys at first refused to listen to him and threatened to treat him as they had their own officers : at this juncture some of the Sepoys who had been in the Company's service recognized him, and remembering the kindnesses they had received from him when he was their company officer, went to his rescue : they lifted him up above the crowd and bore him on their heads to a place of safety, out of the reach of the exasperated mob of mutinous Sepoys.' Eventually the corps was disbanded, and without bloodshed. Malcolm was summoned to Calcutta, and took with him the colours of the disbanded regiment. From the date of Malcolm's interview with the Governor-General in Calcutta, his future was assured. The Marquis Wellesley, like the great Pitt, knew a man when he saw him, and as the historian remarks : ' He saw in Malcolm a man to be trusted and employed.'

The time had now come for the final struggle for supremacy in Southern India between the British and the Mysore Power. Tipu Sultan was offered peacc, but on English terms. The negotiations failed, and there was no alternative but war. The Governor-General, when once he had decided what was the right thing to do, was not the man to delay, and he proceeded in person to Madras to expedite matters. He took Malcolm with him as his political assistant, giving him, at the same time, the appointment of military commander over the troops of the Nizam that were to co-operate with the British in the military operations against Tipu. Malcolm's first duty was to quell a dangerous mutiny among these troops, and this he did to the admiration of the Nizam's officers : at the same time he attracted the attention of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was in command of the British troops

attached to the Nizam's contingent; this proved the commencement of that friendship between the two distinguished men that lasted till Malcolm's death. General Harris was in supreme command of the operations, which in the end were completely successful, though there was a time on the eve of the final assault on the great fortress when matters looked very serious for the British. The story is thus told by the historian: 'The storming party had been told off, and the hour for their advance had nearly arrived, when Malcolm entered the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. The General was sitting alone very gravely pondering the important work before him, and the great interests at stake. "Why, my Lord, so thoughtful," cried Malcolm, congratulating him, by anticipation, on the peerage within his reach. The lightness of his tone was not pleasing to the over-burdened General, who answered sternly, 'Malcolm, this is no time for compliments. We have serious work in hand: don't you see that the European sentry over my tent is so weak from want of food and exhaustion, that a Sepoy could push him down. We must take this fort, or perish in the attempt." There was similar anxiety in Tipu's camp; only a short time before, finding he had been outgeneralled by the British, he had summoned his principal officers, and had exclaimed, "We have arrived at our last stage: what now are we to do? what is your determination?" The officers had replied, "We will all die with you." And it was a fight to a finish. Seringapatam fell, and with it fell its chief: "with his fall ended the great Muhammadan usurpation of Southern India."' John Malcolm was joint-secretary, with Thomas Munro, of the Commission appointed by the Marquis Wellesley for the partition of the Mysore territories.

Malcolm had been able to give his chief fresh evidence of his capacity. He was now to be employed on a mission requiring the exercise of more tactful and delicate diplomacy than he had hitherto been called upon to display. The Governor-General, having in view the necessity of checking the intrigues of the Ruler of Afghanistan, Zaman Shah, and of checkmating the suspected designs of France on India, resolved on the dispatch of a mission to Persia, and to place John Malcolm at the head of it. The mission

left India for the Persian Gulf in 1799. After a visit to Muscat, Malcolm landed at Bushire, and proceeded to Teheran. Englishmen were not so well known in the East in those days as they are now, and it was a good thing for the prestige of England that the young Englishmen who represented her at the courts of Eastern sovereigns were men whose personality was in every way calculated to make a good impression. The historian has recorded the impression Malcolm's personal appearance made on the court of the Shah : 'His fine stature, his commanding presence, and the mixture of good-humour and of resolute prowess with which he conducted all his negotiations, compelled them to form a high estimate of the English people. He was in their eyes a Rustam, or hero of the first magnitude.' Similarly, it has been recorded, young Metcalfe compelled the admiration of the great Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh. The Governor-General considered Malcolm's conduct of the negotiations to have been eminently praiseworthy ; and on his return to India he was summoned to Calcutta for an interview, and was most cordially received. The Marquis promised him the next high appointment in the political service that he had at his disposal. His letters home at this period had kept his family acquainted with the variety of his work, and his father wrote to him in reply : 'The account of your employments is like fairy tales to us ; your filial effusions brought tears of joy to the eyes of your parents. A good head will gain you the esteem and applause of the world, but a good heart alone gives happiness. It is a continual feast.'

Malcolm had been temporarily appointed private secretary to the Governor-General, and he accompanied him on a tour up-country in that capacity. Upon their reaching Allahabad, the Governor-General received the serious news that the envoy of the Persian court had been shot in the course of an affray in the streets of Bombay. Malcolm was sent on a special mission to put matters straight with the Persian court. The work took him about six weeks : he succeeded so well in his mission by the letters of explanation he wrote from Bombay to the Shah, and by his liberal expenditure of money, that it was said after-

wards in Persia that 'the English might kill a dozen ambassadors if they would always pay for them at the same rate'.

On his return from Bombay he was appointed Resident of Mysore. He did not take up the appointment at once: he paid a short visit to Madras, and then proceeded to join the camp of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was engaged in military operations against the Mahrattas, and he was able to be of some assistance to Wellesley in restoring the Peshwa, Baji Rao, to the throne of Puna. He had the misfortune to be absent when the great victory of Assaye was won: he had been obliged to run down to Bombay, to pick up after a serious illness. A visit to Bombay, in order to get a breath of sea-air, was at this time regarded as a panacea for all the ills that English flesh is heir to in the East.

The next political work Malcolm was engaged on was the negotiation of a Treaty with the young Daulat Rao Scindia. Oriental Darbars are usually very solemn ceremonials indeed. The Darbar, which was held to receive Malcolm, appears to have been at one stage a lively scene enough, from the description that has been given of it: 'A hailstorm suddenly came on and hailstones were brought in and presented in all quarters, and all began to eat, or rather to drink them. For ten minutes the scene more resembled a school at the moment when the boys have got to play than an Eastern Darbar.' In one of the best novels of travel ever written, *Eothen*, a statement is made that the character that appeals most to the Oriental is that of the frank and hearty sailor-man, however bluff he may be. There is much truth in this, and it is similarly true that the character that least appeals to them is that of the man who is always studiously polite in his dealings with them. Orientals have ever a keen perception of character and they can quickly detect the false ring that often accompanies an attitude of studied politeness. The one character attracts; the other repels. Malcolm's frank and hearty geniality, which he displayed on all occasions, soon completely captivated the imagination of the young Maharaja. He invited Malcolm to go tiger-shooting with him, and on another occasion he invited him, and this

perhaps was the greatest mark of favour he could show, to play Holi with him. The incident has been thus recorded in Malcolm's own words: 'I am to deliver the Treaty to-day and afterwards to play Holi, for which I have prepared an old coat and an old hat. Scindia is furnished with an engine of great power, by which he can play upon a fellow at fifty yards' distance. He has, besides, a magazine of syringes, so I expect to be well squirted.' There are two sides to the celebration of the festival known as 'The Holi Festival'. On its more boisterous side it consists in throwing red powder and squirting water in which red powder has been dissolved at everybody within reach: and with the more ignorant masses of the population it is often accompanied with much unrestrained licence and revelling; under this aspect it approaches to the Roman Saturnalia. This is the side that is most often seen, especially by Englishmen, and it is this side of it that meets with not altogether undeserved reproach. But there is another side that only reveals itself to those who take the trouble to know something about the intimate life of the people, and who are honoured by their confidence. Under this aspect it is marked by the exchange of very pleasant civilities and courtesies. An Englishman who is fortunate enough to be so honoured may congratulate himself that he has to some extent won the goodwill of his Indian friends. The Treaty which Malcolm had been sent to negotiate was at last signed and dispatched to Calcutta. Malcolm was a little doubtful as to how it would be received by the Governor-General; but he was not a man to be afraid of responsibility: his views on this subject have been thus recorded: 'A man who flees from responsibility in public affairs is like a soldier who quits the rank in action: he is certain of ignominy and does not escape danger.' The Governor-General, after a certain amount of correspondence, eventually wrote his full approval.

Like most Englishmen who have risen to any eminence in India, Malcolm had always kept up his home ties. He experienced about this time the greatest loss that a man can experience: his father died, and it seemed to him, as, indeed, a similar bereavement has seemed to others

similarly situated, as if his chief stimulus to exertion had been removed: the sudden cessation of a regular correspondence and interchange of sympathy seems to have temporarily a paralysing effect upon the mind: and most men, living a life of distant exile in the East, have at some period or other of that life experienced this feeling. Filial affection was deeply engraved in Malcolm's heart, and it is characteristic of him that he at once placed all his resources at the disposal of his mother and sisters. This domestic trouble, and a return of his old malady, compelled him again to go to the sea-coast to recruit his health: this time he went to Vizagapatam on the East Coast.

On regaining his usual health, and with it his buoyancy of spirits, he proceeded to rejoin his appointment at Mysore. On the way he stayed at Madras to bid farewell to Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was now leaving India for good. He had just settled down, and was engaged on his *History of Persia*, when he received a summons to Calcutta, where he found that he was again wanted to go on a special mission to the court of Scindia. Complications had arisen owing to Scindia having become reconciled to Holkar, who was still in arms against the British, and having moved his troops up to support Holkar. It was to be Malcolm's delicate mission to detach Scindia from his new alliance and to get the Mahratta Brahman, who had been his evil counsellor, dismissed. His instructions were that if negotiations failed, and Scindia committed any hostile act, he was to be at once attacked. Malcolm had to proceed at the hottest time of the year to Upper India to join the camp of Lord Lake, who was operating against Holkar. What a journey in the hottest season of the year meant in the days when the present amenities of travel did not exist, may be judged of by a visit to any old cemetery in the interior of India: in one such, perhaps the oldest of its kind, which the author of this sketch well remembers being visited by the late Sir W. W. Hunter, when searching for materials for his interesting pictures of life and work in India, it is no uncommon thing to see an inscription engraved on the headstone of a grave to this effect: 'Died on a palki journey during the month of May.' Even now men are often struck down by heat apoplexy when travel-

ling at the height of the hot weather. On reaching Lord Lake's camp, Malcolm found the army temporarily halted perforce on account of the fierce scorching winds, then prevalent. Meanwhile his old chief, the Marquis Wellesley, had been succeeded by Lord Cornwallis, who had come out as Governor-General for a second term of office with instructions to reverse the policy of his predecessor. Lord Lake received orders to bring the operations against Holkar to as speedy a close as possible. Lord Lake decided that Holkar's various aggressive acts required reprisals on his part, and the army continued its advance. Holkar retreated and crossed the Sutlej. It looked at one time as if the Sepoys of the British army would not cross this river. The incident has been thus told: 'There were signs of wavering, and the leading companies sat down on the banks, when Malcolm rode up to them, spoke in his brave hearty manner a few cheering words to them reminding them that the holy shrine of Amritsar was in advance, and asking them if they would shrink from such a pilgrimage. And the story runs that such was the magic effect of these words, that the Sepoys started up to a man, crossed the river, and soon, followed by their comrades, were in full march into the Punjab.' Holkar submitted, and sent his envoys to treat for peace. A Treaty was made with him and a new one with Scindia. Amongst others who sent envoys at the same time were certain Sikh chiefs. A characteristic story is told of an incident that occurred one day when Malcolm was giving an audience in his tent to some of their envoys: 'Two of his friends suddenly burst into the tent with the news that there were two large tigers in the neighbourhood. Malcolm at the moment had been in some perplexity what reply to give to the envoys, so the interruption was not unwelcome. Starting up and seizing his ever-ready gun he cried out to the astonished Sikhs, "Bagh! Bagh!" (a tiger! a tiger!), and ordering his elephant to be brought round rushed out of the tent. Joining his friends, he shot the tigers, returned with the spoil, and replacing the gun in the corner of his tent, he resumed his seat, and took up the thread of the conversation as if nothing had happened. The envoys in the meanwhile had been declaring that the English gentle-

man was mad. But there was method in such madness. He had done more than shoot the tigers. He had gained time. He returned with his mind fully made up on an important point which required consideration. And the envoys received a different and a wiser answer than would have been given if the tiger-hunt had not formed an episode in the day's Council.' The task of disbanding the Irregular Levies proved a more onerous task than that of Treaty-making; and though not altogether pleased with the new policy of non-interference in the affairs of Native States so recently inaugurated, he worked loyally in carrying it out, and remained in Upper India as long as anything remained to be done.

On the conclusion of his mission Malcolm returned to Calcutta; and after a short stay there he proceeded to Madras on his way to Mysore. While in Madras he was again taken ill. His popularity was so great that he was never left for long alone in his sickness: he was still in the prime of life, but he did not lack 'that which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends'; and he speaks of his sick-room being turned into a chamber levée. Soon after he returned to Mysore he married, and then definitely gave up the intention he had had of retiring from the service; he had already had twenty-four years of service, but he was still a comparatively young man, and was destined not to finally sever his connexion with the country till he had completed in all forty-seven years' service.

Persian affairs had again come to the front. The Sovereigns of Russia and France had but recently formed an alliance; and they were suspected by the British Government of designs against the possessions of the East India Company. The dispatch of an ambassador to the court of Persia had been determined on. Malcolm's friends in England, and among them Sir Arthur Wellesley, had not been successful in getting him nominated to that office. Sir Harford Jones, who was appointed, had, however, taken what Lord Minto, now Governor-General, had thought such an unconscionable time upon the way, that he determined to send a special mission, with Malcolm at its head, from Calcutta. The French already had a

magnificent mission at Teheran, and it was thought expedient that England should be represented in an equally magnificent manner. In making his arrangements, therefore, Malcolm had practically a free hand. He left Bombay one April morning in 1808, just as the King's ambassador was in close proximity to that port. Sir Harford Jones received instructions from Lord Minto to remain in Bombay. Meanwhile, Malcolm duly arrived in Persia. The messenger he had sent on with dispatches to the Shah was not allowed to proceed beyond Shiraj : the Persian authorities there ordered him to negotiate with the Prince-Governor of the Province. This was all due to the intrigues of the French, whose influence was all-powerful at Teheran. Malcolm regarded it as a direct insult to England, to be met only by his withdrawal from Persian soil, and he determined to return to India to consult with Lord Minto. This he did, leaving a representative at Bushire, who was ordered ' to hold on as best he could '.

He was very cordially received by the Governor-General, and, as a result of his conferences with him, he was directed to return to the Persian Gulf and establish himself with a small force on an island in the Gulf, from which he could threaten the Persian seaboard. The wording of the instructions he received from Lord Minto was a measure of the confidence reposed in him : ' Your duties are not to be defined. All I can say is you are placed in a situation where you are as likely to go wrong from prudence as from the want of it.' This again gave him a free hand, and was just such a roving commission as suited his temperament. He had only just left Calcutta, and was still in the river, when he was recalled by Lord Minto, who had received the news that Sir Harford Jones had given them the slip and had set sail suddenly for Persia. Meanwhile, Malcolm had to remain in Calcutta in more or less enforced inactivity. An amusing incident that occurred during this time is thus recorded in his own words : ' One day Lord Minto caught me employing myself with John Elliot and other boys in trying how long we could keep up two cricket-balls. He says he must send me on a mission to some very young monarch, for that I shall never have the gravity of an ambassador for a prince turned of twelve.

He, however, added the well-known and admirable story of Henry IV of France, who, when caught on all fours carrying one of his children, by the Spanish envoy, looked up, and said, " Is your Excellency married ? " " I am, and have a family," was the reply. " Well then," said the Monarch, " I am satisfied, and shall take another turn round the room." And off he galloped, with his little son flogging and spurring him, on his back.' At last the Council of the Governor-General came to the decision to practically ignore the King's ambassador ; and once again Malcolm started for Bombay : he had just completed his arrangements there when he received fresh orders from the Governor-General to suspend his operations. Sir Harford Jones had got the start of them, and had already left Bushire for Teheran, when Lord Minto's dispatches ordering him to return reached that port. There was therefore no help for it ; Lord Minto did not wish to complicate matters by a hostile expedition while the King of England was negotiating, through his ambassador, with the King of Persia. This seemed to be the end of all hope of Malcolm's conducting a second mission to Persia ; but, as it turned out, it was only a postponement.

On the receipt of his orders to suspend operations in Bombay, Malcolm decided to return to his charge in Mysore. On the way there he was detained in the Madras Presidency, upon the invitation of the Governor of Madras, to assist him in the delicate and difficult task of restoring discipline amongst the European officers of the Madras army. He had most difficulty with the European regiment at Masulipatam, for in this case there was the additional danger of the men of the regiment following the lead of their officers and becoming insubordinate in their turn. The story of how he helped to bring the officers back to their allegiance is thus told : ' He met the officers, talked the matter over freely and candidly with them, admitting as much as he safely could, and afterwards joined them at mess. After dinner, a young officer, flushed with wine, proposed as a toast "Our Common Cause" ; with characteristic readiness of address, Malcolm rose and said, " Aye ! the Common Cause of our country." The amendment was received and drunk with enthusiasm, and soon afterwards

his own health was toasted with universal applause.' This policy succeeded at least in gaining time until the difficulties gradually disappeared, and discipline was eventually restored. Malcolm's special characteristics were never shown to better advantage than on this occasion, much criticized as his conduct was at the time. He believed thoroughly in the innate goodness of human nature, and that it only required the exercise of a little common sense combined with tact and temper to bring it out. The well-known line

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil

represented to him not a mere poetic fancy, but a living and ever-present truth.

Meanwhile news of Sir Harford Jones's progress in Persia had reached Lord Minto at Calcutta: it seemed to him, to say the least, undignified, and not consonant with the traditions of the country whose representative he was. He decided that the situation demanded an ambassador of a different type, and one who would maintain those traditions with the dignity that befitted them. He looked to Malcolm to do this, and he worded his invitation to him in these flattering terms: 'I entreat you to go and lift us to our own height, and to the station that belongs to us once more.' He summoned Malcolm to meet him at Madras, and arranged with him the final details of the business in hand. Malcolm eventually sailed for the Persian Gulf early in 1810, nearly two years after his first start. Things were done more deliberately in those 'spacious times' of Anglo-Indian History. On his arrival at Bushire, he again sent his mesenger on in advance with the letter of which he was the bearer to the Shah; while waiting for an answer, he finished the *Political History of India,* that he was engaged on, and then began to enjoy his unwonted leisure in his congenial sports of hunting, shooting and riding: he had learnt one secret of retaining buoyancy of spirits at a more or less advanced age by enjoying the companionship of youth, and he was always attended on his excursions by his numerous staff of young officers.

At last he received orders to advance. The Persian

officials on the route showed themselves eager for English gold and English gifts. The King's ambassador who had preceded him had been distributing largesse with a lavish hand. To the Oriental mind such lavishness is only considered an imitation of Oriental ways, and any such imitation brings with it only contempt: it brings no respect. This attitude of the Oriental mind is well illustrated in the history of Lord Macartney's mission to China. It is recorded that 'the English mission had taken no presents with them expressly for the purpose of presentation: indeed, Lord Macartney was hard put to it to eke out the few valuables he had taken with him, when he was asked for presents for the court'. The English mission, moreover, declined to perform all the elaborate and obsequious ceremonial customary at the court of Pekin. The Dutch mission that followed were laden with presents, and outdid even Chinese officials in their servility and obsequiousness: and yet the English mission, though in the enigmatical Oriental way they received polite hints that their room was preferable to their company, were at any rate treated with respect: the Dutch mission, on the other hand, were treated with contumely and contempt. On this occasion the lavish presents of Sir Harford Jones were regarded by Persian officials in the light of bribes, and so Malcolm found it. They were as ready to bribe, moreover, as to be bribed themselves. The story is told how, 'whilst Malcolm was at Shiraz, it was intimated to him by the minister that a costly present of jewels had been prepared as a gift to his wife. Checking his first feeling of indignation, Malcolm replied, "Tell your master that when I was at Mysore, the minister there would gladly have heaped costly presents upon us; but instead of this, on my persuasion, he made a fine new road that was much wanted and dedicated it to Mrs. Malcolm. Such are the presents I like."' It was a wise policy on the part of the Government of India to interdict its officials from receiving presents from the people. Fruit and flowers may alone be accepted. The most acceptable gift that the author of this sketch used to receive from a Hindu gentleman who used to visit him ceremoniously at all great festivals, was a single flower plucked out of his own garden:

it showed real genuineness of feeling without display. Malcolm succeeded, but not without some trouble, in getting the King's ambassador to work with him. He was well received by the Shah, who instituted for his special honour the decoration of the Lion and the Sun: he expressed a wish also to retain Malcolm as his military adviser. Though the actual results of the mission were not great—indeed, one writer has recorded that 'the creation of a new Order, and the introduction of potatoes, was the sole result of this long and costly expedition'—still, the part that Malcolm had taken in it had only enhanced his great reputation.

On his return from Persia, Malcolm remained for some time in Bombay, previous to taking furlough to England. On arriving in England he felt half inclined to remain there for good: but he was only forty-eight, and he felt that he still had many years of active and vigorous life before him, and he finally made up his mind that, if the opportunity presented itself, he would return to India. On his way home he had had the misfortune to lose his mother. And one of the first things he did after his return to England, was to visit the graves of his parents in Scotland. His visit has been thus recorded: 'Visited the graves of my parents, and heard the noblest praise of them from the aged, the infirm, and the poor that they had aided and supported; and to whom the aid and support of the family are still given.' This last sentence was characteristic: one of Malcolm's most marked traits was his openhanded generosity. His chief occupation during this period of leisure was the completion of his *History of Persia*, which he was at length able to publish: it was at once most favourably received in England, and when, at a late period, he visited France, it was as the Historian of Persia that he was welcomed. He was called upon to give evidence before a committee of the House of Commons at the time when the Company's charter was about to be renewed. He would have liked nothing better than active military employment under his old friend, Sir Arthur Wellesley, now the Duke of Wellington, but the Peninsular War was near its end, and when the Duke visited England for a spell, in 1814, he advised Malcolm to enter Parlia-

ment, if he could, as one chance of bringing himself into notice, and so of obtaining the high public employment he was in search of. He had been knighted some time before and he received the still greater distinction, mainly, it is believed, through the influence of the Duke, of a Knight-Companionship, or as it became later styled, a Knight-Commandership, of the Bath. After the entry of the Allies into Paris, on the morrow of the battle of Waterloo, he saw the great Duke again, in Paris, and enjoyed many conversations with him. One such is recorded: the conversation had turned on the Duke's great victory: 'People ask me,' said Wellington, 'for an account of the action. I tell them it was hard pounding on both sides, and we pounded the hardest.' Before Malcolm returned to India, in 1816, he received yet another high distinction. The University of Oxford conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

The Marquis of Hastings was now Governor-General of India. He had certain operations in view against the free-booting levies of the Pindaris, who were so closely bound up with the Mahrattas, being, it was generally supposed, largely subsidized if not actively supported by the Mahratta Princes of Central India, that it was thought possible that the operations against them would involve the British in war with the Mahrattas. And so eventually indeed it proved. Malcolm was known to know more about the Central India States than any man in India at the time. The Governor-General summoned him to Calcutta, and entrusted him with a twofold mission: he was to be Brigadier-General in Command of the most advanced force, and at the same time the Governor-General's agent in supreme control of all political work. The remark he made on the occasion has been recorded, and is eminently characteristic: 'What is really delightful, from the Governor-General down to the lowest black, or white, red or brown, clothed or naked, all appear happy at my advancement.' In his capacity as political officer, he visited the Residencies of Mysore, Haidarabad, Puna, and Nagpur. His journeys were generally made on horseback or by Palki. He gave some excellent advice to the Peshwa, Baji Rao, at Puna, which that prince promised

to follow, but history has recorded that, when the hour of trial came, he failed to keep his promise. Active operations against the Pindaris having commenced, his political duties had to give way to military exigencies. He took command of his own division of the army, and proceeded to join the main body of the army of the Deccan. News soon arrived in the camp of the revolt of the Peshwa, and of the Bhonsla, and of the march southwards of the army of Holkar. Malcolm had first tried what diplomacy could do with the envoys from Indore, but as this had failed, hostilities could not be averted. The result was the defeat of Holkar's army at Mahidpur. The battle was mainly won by Malcolm's division, spurred on, as they were, to enthusiasm by Malcolm's own example, who rarely displayed his military qualities of fearlessness and courage to better advantage than on this occasion. An anecdote is told in illustration of this: 'The officers of his staff were often alarmed for his safety, but he had no thought for himself: on one occasion he was so far in front, having gone forward to rectify some error in the advancing line, that he was in danger of being shot by his own men. His native aide de camp rode up to one of his officers, and said, "Look at the general! he is in front of our men who are firing: for God's sake bring him back." The officer rode forward to bring his chief back, but he only returned when he had done his work.' Sir John Kaye has said of Malcolm that 'he was one of those soldier-statesmen of the first class, whose vocation it was to pass rapidly from the command of an army to the negotiation of a Treaty, and to be equally at home in camp and in council.' Military operations having come to a close, Malcolm now resumed his political duties. He concluded a Treaty with the Mahratta envoys from Indore, and spent some time with the young Maharaja. He has recorded his experiences at the court: 'All the chiefs of Holkar are in good humour. The boy himself is at present delighted with a small elephant, which he had lost and I recovered and sent back to him, which dances like a dancing-girl, and a little Pegu pony of which I made him a present, and which ambles at a great rate. I went out to hunt with him the other day, and we had great fun.

The little fellow, though only eleven, rides beautifully. He expressed grief at my going away, as he discovered that I was very fond of play and hunting.' He had far greater difficulty with the Peshwa ; but he succeeded at last by dint of great tact and judgement in effecting what the British Government desired, his complete and unconditional submission to the British terms. He was to become for ever a pensioner of the British Government. The terms which Malcolm offered were exceedingly liberal, and included the handsome provision for life of an annuity of £80,000. This liberal provision was much criticized at the time ; and the Governor-General himself, though he wisely accepted the arrangements made by his agent, thought that they erred on the side of liberality. It is of interest to note that the adopted son of the Peshwa, known to all time in Anglo-Indian records as 'The infamous Nana Sahib', made it the basis of his vindictive hate of the British Government of his time that this annuity was not continued to him on his adoptive father's death.

Perhaps the greatest of all Malcolm's achievements in India, and that for which he has won undying fame, was his pacification and settlement of a country that had long been given up to anarchy and confusion. He had hitherto had opportunities of showing his capacity as a statesman and as a soldier : he was now to shine forth as an administrator. Malwa was the Province entrusted to him to reduce to order and prosperity. It has been recorded that the three secrets of his successful administration were 'trusting to time, keeping people in a good humour, and accessibility to all'. He once wrote to a friend : 'The fault I find with the younger politicians is that they are too impatient of abuses, and too eager for reform. I do not think they know as well as we old ones what a valuable gentleman Time is : how much better work is done when it does itself than when done by the best of us.' Of his accessibility it is recorded, 'He had a word for every one, high and low' ; he once wrote to a friend : 'I wish I had you here for a week, to show you my Nawabs, Rajas, Bhil Chiefs, Patels, and Ryots. My room is a thoroughfare from morning to night. No Munshis, Diwans, Dubashes, or even Chobdars, but 'Char darwaze khole', all four doors

open, that the inhabitants of these countries may learn what our principles are at the fountain-head.' The subordinate officials about his tents were never allowed to block access to the presence of the Sahib Bahadur, as they so well know how to do. Cicero, in one of his famous letters to the Governors of Roman Provinces, has counselled similar principles of conduct. No one who does not know his India well, and the ways of subordinate officials, can realize the extent to which they can open or bar the way at their pleasure to the presence of the Hakim, or at any rate accelerate, or retard, access : the only 'Open Sesame' known to them is the magic watchword 'Bakshish'. The historian has recorded that 'when Bishop Heber travelled through Central India, he found everywhere indications of the affectionate remembrance in which Malcolm and his good deeds were held by the people of the country. The name of Malcolm on an amulet was regarded as a charm to protect the wearer of it from the powers of evil.' Malcolm himself also has recorded how 'a custom prevailed among the Bhil ladies of tying a string upon the right arm of their children, whilst the priest pronounced the name of Malcolm three times, as a sovereign cure for a fever'. The author of this short sketch can also testify to the esteem and honour in which the name of Malcolm is still held in Central India. He received a visit one day from an old Muhammadan gentleman, who brought with him a package : he proceeded to unroll the numerous foldings of cloth in which Indians ever wrap their most cherished treasures, and brought to light a document bearing the signature 'John Malcolm' : it set forth the services rendered by the grandfather of its possessor in coming to the aid of the British at the time of the Pindari operations with a contingent of 2,000 horsemen. When his work of pacification and settlement was over Malcolm determined to proceed on furlough to England : this time he thought he was really leaving India for good.

He left Bombay towards the end of 1821, amid universal demonstrations of respect. On his way home, he travelled through Egypt, and was most hospitably entertained by its then ruler, Mehemet Ali. Literary work occupied a good deal of his leisure time while he was at home, but

his temperament demanded a life of action. The Duke of Wellington at his request tried to get him the Governorship of Madras, but was not successful, and he again recommended Malcolm to give up all thought of further employment in India, and to enter Parliament. At last, however, came the offer of the Governorship of Bombay; and he at once accepted it. Mr. George Canning was at the time Prime Minister of England, and it was to his recognition of Malcolm's great services in India that he owed his elevation to a Governorship.

Malcolm took up his office at the end of 1827 and he remained in office for some three years: these were years of comparative tranquillity in India, and Malcolm's duties assumed more of a routine nature than had hitherto been the case. He still retained his old characteristic of accessibility to all. He has described the system he adopted whereby all might have easy access to his presence: 'I hold a public breakfast at Government House for six days in the week, to which every one can come that likes. It is a social levée, without formality or distinction. I am down half an hour before breakfast, and stay as long after it. Every human being who desires it, from writer to judge, from cadet to general, has his turn at the Governor. At half-past ten I am in my own room, have no visitors, and am entirely given up to business.' Malcolm had just made up his mind to leave India for good, when he received the offer of the newly created Lieutenant-Governorship of Agra, from Lord William Bentinck. In declining the offer, he informed the Governor-General of his wish to return to England: he was sixty-two years of age, and had been connected with India in one capacity or another for forty-seven years: his hopes were now centred on entering Parliament where, he told Lord William Bentinck, he still hoped to work for his country and for India. He left India finally at the end of 1830.

He died three years after his return home. A monumental statue by the celebrated sculptor, Chantrey, was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey. At that great banquet that was given him on the eve of his departure from England to take up his office as Governor of Bombay, the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Canning, used these

eloquent words, which, while intended at the time specially to apply to Sir John Malcolm, were also meant to include the long roll of distinguished men who have done conspicuous public service for their country in India: 'There cannot be found in the history of Europe the existence of any monarchy, which within a given time has produced so many men of the first talents in civil and military life, as India has first trained for herself, and then given to their native country.' Similarly, the Duke of Wellington said: 'It is now thirty years since I formed an intimate friendship with Sir John Malcolm. During that eventful period there has been no operation of consequence, no diplomatic measure, in which my friend has not borne a conspicuous part. Alike distinguished by courage and by talent, the history of his life during this period would be the history of the glory of his country in India.'

With these words from two men so qualified to speak, this sketch concludes.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MAKING OF SOUTH-WESTERN INDIA

MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE, 1779–1859.

ELPHINSTONE is chiefly famous for his work in Western India: to this day his memory is revered in Bombay by Englishmen and Indians alike for his nobility of character, his justice, and his encouragement of education. Besides being a diplomatist and an administrator, he was an historian, and his *History of India* has won for him a permanent place in literature. He was practically the maker of South-West India, and as such he takes rank as a Ruler of India. A sketch of his career is practically a sketch of the overthrow of Mahratta supremacy, and of the introduction of British rule in the Deccan.

He was one of the many distinguished men who helped to carry out the policy designed by the master mind of the great Marquis Wellesley, and among his contemporaries were such men as Metcalfe, Malcolm, and Munro. One striking characteristic of this period of British-Indian history is the extremely youthful age at which so many of the men who were afterwards so famous in the annals of British India were launched into active careers in India. Thus Malcolm obtained his cadetship at the age of twelve, and landed at Madras before he was fourteen. Metcalfe was a writer in Calcutta at the age of fifteen. Elphinstone was only fifteen when he left home, and Munro was eighteen. It was an age of adventure fitted to stimulate the energies of the young, and youth proved no bar to their rapid advancement and promotion. Instances are not wanting in the history of Eastern nations of practically young boys being invested with responsibility and power: thus Baber was only twelve when he became King of Ferghana, and Akbar became Emperor of India at the age of eighteen.

Another characteristic that marks this generation of Anglo-Indian officials was the union of bodily activity with

great intellectual accomplishments: they lived an open-air life, and were equally at home in the camp, the hunting-field, and the Darbar, and owing to the greater leisure they possessed they had greater facilities for study, perhaps, than their successors: considering that they had been thus launched into public life when most boys are still at school, and considering, moreover, that the stock of learning they started with could not, under the circumstances, have been large, it redounded all the more to their credit that they should have become the scholars that most of them did become. The record of Elphinstone's reading during one of his long journeys, when he was only twenty-one, would have done credit to that 'Prince of Readers, Lord Macaulay'. He generally travelled with two camel-loads of books, so arranged that he could readily lay his hands on any volume he wanted. His love of study did not prevent his being at the same time distinguished for his soldierly qualities. The great Duke himself, who saw him under fire at Argaum and at Assaye, remarked that he had mistaken his vocation, and ought to have been a soldier. He was also an administrator of no mean order, and his bearing at the native courts he was accredited to, proved him to be possessed of rare diplomatic powers. In him were all combined: 'The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword.' He became Governor of Bombay at the early age of thirty-nine, and more than once, after his retirement, he refused the high office of Governor-General of India.

Elphinstone came of distinguished ancestry: his father, who had fought under Wolfe in Canada, and his uncles had all done conspicuous public service. His brothers also held high office. Examples of devotion in their country's service were not wanting, therefore, had he required such to stimulate his own devotion. As a boy, his ambition had been to enter the Army, but he was content to accept a writership on the Bengal Establishment. He had to leave for India direct from his school in London, and was thus unable, to his own great sorrow, to bid farewell to his mother and sisters in their home in Scotland.

Sir John Shore was Governor-General when he landed in India in 1796, after a voyage from England of eight months.

His first appointment was to Benares, which was the frontier station of Bengal to the North-West at this period. His quiet career here was suddenly interrupted by the rising against the English which was organized by the deposed sovereign of Oudh, the Nawab Wazir Ali, who was living at Benares at the time, under the surveillance of the British authorities. The Resident, Mr. Cherry, was murdered, and Elphinstone himself had to flee for his life. This affair led to his receiving his first diplomatic mission, which was to find out how far certain natives of high rank at Benares were implicated in the plot. It was at Benares, under the influence of his chief, Mr. Davis, a noted Sanskrit scholar, that Elphinstone seems to have acquired that taste for reading that became his most congenial occupation in his leisure hours.

Having received an offer of the post of assistant-secretary to the Resident at Puna, Elphinstone hesitated about accepting the appointment until he had consulted Mr. Davis on the subject. Mr. Davis's only reply was a quotation from the great World-Poet Shakespeare : 'What pleasure, sir, find we in life to lock it from action and adventure ?' This quotation, which Elphinstone said ever after rang in his ears, decided the matter : he accepted the appointment. He travelled to his new station with another young civilian, in a very leisurely manner, and by a long détour. The journey took them the better part of a year. In passing through Orissa, which was then Mahratta territory, they could not help noticing the change in the demeanour of the people from what it was in British territory : they were not actually rude, but they showed no respect. They would crowd round the encampment in the evening, and watch the young Englishmen going through their exercises, which consisted of throwing the spear, sword exercise, and firing at a mark with pistols. A curious incident that occurred at Puri, when they were close to the Temple of Jagannath, 'Lord of the World,' impressed their imagination ; they met a Faqir, who called the young men to him and said, 'Listen, when will you take this country ? This country needs you. The Hindus here are villains, but you are true men, when will you take this country ?' We answered, 'Never.' He replied,

'Yes, you will certainly take it.' Within a short two years indeed the British did take the country, and the strange prophecy of the Faqir was fulfilled. At Seringapatam, they were the guests of Colonel Arthur Wellesley. They spent three months at the court of Haidarabad, then, as now, the most magnificent court in India. The Resident was a Major Kirkpatrick: he had married the Persian minister's daughter, and Elphinstone describes him as an Orientalized Englishman. 'His manners were affected, and his conversation most affected; he wore mustachios, and dyed his fingers with henna, but in other respects he resembled an Englishman. In the presence of the Nizam, he behaved like a native of the country, and with great propriety.'

On arriving at his destination, Elphinstone was presented to the Peshwa. In a comparison of the meanness of the Peshwa's court, as compared with the magnificence of the Nizam's court, he remarked that none of the Mahratta chiefs were even like native gentlemen. He had not yet learnt that this so called meanness was really a characteristic of the simplicity that is so marked a feature of the true Mahratta gentleman, especially in his dress and personal habits. The Mahratta temperament, moreover, differs essentially from that of the Muhammadan: he loves power, it is true, but he cares not for the trappings of power or display.

About a year after Elphinstone's arrival at his post, the second Mahratta War broke out. The Mahrattas were the only Native Power that had steadily refused to recognize the British Government as the paramount Power in India. When, therefore, the Peshwa of Puna, Baji Rao, signed the Treaty of Bassein with the British, by which he agreed to have no diplomatic relations with other Powers, except through them, the other Mahratta princes considered this tantamount to a recognition of British supremacy: this they refused to accept, and hence the war: apart from this, they had long determined to try conclusions again with the British. The campaign, once started, was soon completely successful; the operations had been carried on in three different parts of the country: in Hindustan, under Lord Lake; in the Deccan, under Sir Arthur Wellesley;

and in Orissa. Owing to the illness of Sir John Malcolm, Elphinstone was deputed to attend Sir Arthur Wellesley in a more or less undefined capacity as his confidential secretary: he acted chiefly as interpreter, an office which he was very well capable of holding, owing to his great linguistic attainments: he was a good Mahratti, Persian, and Hindustani scholar. He was also the head of the intelligence department: he does not seem, however, to have been very hard worked. The soldiering life, especially with so distinguished an exponent of the art of war as Sir Arthur Wellesley, was thoroughly to his taste. What he especially enjoyed was 'the combination of society, study, business, action, and adventure'. Amongst the booty taken at Ahmadnagar had been an Arabic Prayer-Book, and Elphinstone records how Sir Arthur Wellesley restored it to its owner, a very famous Dervish, who had predicted the fall of the Fortress-City. Earl Roberts, it may be noted, displayed a similar reverence for the religious feelings of those he was fighting against, when he ordered the restoration to their owners of all sacred books captured in the course of the Boer War. Elphinstone rode by the general's side throughout the day of the battle of Assaye: he and another member of the staff were the only two who were not touched, though they seemed to have had some very narrow escapes. Sir Arthur Wellesley displayed his usual coolness of bearing, and Elphinstone noted how at one critical moment of the battle, he had galloped close up to the enemy's line by mistake: three horses of the party were knocked over: upon some one remarking, 'Sir, that is the enemy's line,' the general replied, 'Is it? Ha, damme, so it is,' and turned his horse. At the battle of Argaum, in Berar, Elphinstone again rode by the general's side, and took part in the great cavalry charge. He has thus recorded his experiences: 'The balls knocked up the dust under our horses' feet, I had no narrow escapes this time, and I felt quite unconcerned, never winced, nor cared how the shot came about the worst time. And all the while I was at pains to see how the people looked, and every gentleman seemed at ease as much as if he were riding a-hunting.' One of the most realistic descriptions of a cavalry charge in literature

occurs in that most realistic of M. Zola's novels, *La Débâcle*; it is almost possible to hear the thunder of the horses' hoofs as they charge madly across the plain. Elphinstone picked up a wounded Hindustani soldier on the field of battle next morning; the man became his servant, and remained in his service till he finally left India, a period of more than twenty-five years. Elphinstone's graphic description of the storming of a fort in which he took part is of special interest, as being the description of a man who, a soldier at heart, was also a philosopher and an historian: 'Our advance was silent, deliberate, and even solemn. When we went on to the breach, I thought I was going to a great danger; but my mind was so made up to it that I did not care for anything, the party going to the storm put me in mind of the eighth and ninth verses of the third book of the Iliad of Homer:—"Forward advanced the Greeks, in silence breathing threats, each passionately eager to outdo each other." And after one gets over the breach, one is too busy and animated to think of anything but how to get on.'

This campaign had been Elphinstone's opportunity: he had proved his worth, and the road to rapid promotion was now made comparatively easy for him. A word from Sir Arthur Wellesley to his brother, the Marquis, and Elphinstone received the important appointment of Resident at the court of the Bhonsla, which carried with it a salary of three thousand rupees a month. He was only twenty-four at the time. It was no easy task that he had thus entered upon, and he knew it from the first. He realized that another struggle with the Mahrattas was impending, and that all that could be done was to postpone the evil day. One of his duties was to get intelligence as to what was going on at the Raja's court: he knew that there were intrigues, but it was not in his nature to meet intrigue with intrigue, and anything like what is significantly called espionage was abhorrent to him. The difficulty was to get the intelligence he wanted, and at the same time to avoid anything like secret methods in obtaining it. The conclusion he finally came to is given in his own words: 'I must never forget to be always and absolutely open; if I try cunning management, I act

contrary to my own character, and that of my nation, and perhaps fail after all. My diplomatic motto ought to be :— "Fair and above-board in all my dealings, avoiding all dissimulation and deceit."' Characteristically, he illustrates his remarks with a classical quotation : 'He is as inimical to me as are the Gates of Hades, who hides one thing in his thoughts, and utters another.' The success of Elphinstone's diplomacy was especially gratifying to the Marquis Wellesley, one of the features of whose system of training his young civilians was their early initiation into the arts of diplomacy, and he complimented him upon it.

Certain incidents that occurred at court in Elphinstone's time go to show that the Raja himself was of a less truculent disposition than the men about him, who had been giving Elphinstone so much trouble by their war proclivities. He has thus recorded two such incidents : 'A servant on one occasion washed the Raja's hands with scalding water, the courtiers were all for putting the man to death : the Raja, however, forgave him. On another occasion, when the Raja wanted water, he found the lotah, that is the brass vessel in common use, filled with ghi : again the courtiers called out to have the man who had brought it killed at once ; and one of them, indeed, was on the point of killing him ; but the Raja said, "Let him go : it is easy to kill a man, but not so easy to make another."' And yet these very men, who were ready enough to kill in order to satisfy a whim, were not prepared to do so to satisfy the ends of justice : Elphinstone had asked the minister to execute some men who had really deserved death as robbers and murderers, and the minister had replied : 'He knew the English put people to death for such offences, but his Highness shuddered at the name of an execution.' But to the Western imagination the workings of the Oriental mind ever appear inconsistent and illogical. Elphinstone describes the answer as 'a mirror of slavish ideas and Hindustani manners'.

Elphinstone had a fairly tranquil time of it at Nagpur, varied occasionally by alarms from the Pindaris. He himself had a narrow escape on one of his marches : some of his tent equipage and followers were carried off, while

straggling in the rear. The Pindaris travelled with incredible swiftness; beaten off at one place, they would appear somewhere else sixty miles off the same day: they thus succeeded in ravaging wide tracts of territory within a very short space of time. The native sports of hawking and coursing afforded him a means of relaxation during this period, together with an occasional beat for pig and for tigers; but reading formed his principal relaxation; with Prospero he could say :—

> My Library
> Is Dukedom large enough.

In order to enjoy his favourite pursuit undisturbed he built himself a bungalow some little distance out of Nagpur, and called it 'Falconer's Hall'. In one of his Minutes on Education, issued when he was Governor of Bombay, he has recorded his opinion of classical poetry as a valuable factor in education, in these terms: 'Other compositions may fall into disuse and oblivion as knowledge increases with a people, but not so their poetry: the standard works maintain their reputation undiminished in every age: they form the models of composition, and the fountains of classical language, and the writers of the rudest ages are those who contribute the most to the delight and refinement of the most improved of their posterity.' Classical poetry formed his favourite reading in this retreat, but he found himself compelled to give up reading Persian poetry, as it gave him, he said, 'the blue devils.' Had he known Sanskrit, he would have found in the grand and sonorous cadence of the language of its poetry something to stimulate his imagination, and to contribute to his peace of mind quite as much as did Greek poetry, to which he was obliged to return, when he found Persian poetry having a depressing effect upon his mind.

After some four years spent in Nagpur, Elphinstone took furlough in India for a year. On his way to Calcutta, he passed through Chhota Nagpur, then a forest-clad and almost unexplored hill-country: he visited and had much conversation with the Chief of Udaipur in that country on sport, and especially on the Gond methods of killing tigers.

The chiefs of this part of the country have not altered much in this respect; they are still as great sportsmen as ever, and their sons are initiated into the 'Sport of Kings' at a very early age. He was still young, as his remarks on his enjoyment of the gay doings in the capital evidence: 'Such lots of women, and laughing and philandering, that I was in Heaven.'

Soon after his return to Nagpur, Elphinstone received orders to join the court of Scindia. The Maharaja was at the time moving about the country with an enormous camp, somewhat after the manner of the Mogul Emperors, whose camps were almost like towns on the march. He was only about two months with Scindia, when he was ordered to Delhi to take charge of an embassy that was to proceed to the court of the Amir of Afghanistan.

At Delhi he met Metcalfe, who was starting on a similar mission to the court of Ranjit Singh at Lahore. The danger that seemed to threaten the British position in India at this period was an invasion of India by Napoleon Buonaparte, who was now at the height of his power, and was known to have designs on India: he is said even to have chosen his route. It was to guard against this danger that Lord Minto resolved to establish friendly relations with the several Powers holding the keys of the North-Western Frontiers, as they then were. Besides the missions of Metcalfe and Elphinstone, another under Malcolm was dispatched to Persia: as well as missions on a smaller scale to Sindh and Biluchistan. Elphinstone's mission was on a magnificent scale: he had a staff of thirteen selected British officers. He found the Amir, Shah Shuja, at Peshawar, and soon discovered that his position was by no means so secure as had been thought: and, indeed, within a few weeks of his signing a Treaty between himself and the British, he had been driven from his throne, and had become an exile in the Punjab. He still, however, kept up the show of royal magnificence, and much of the ceremonial traditional with the court of the Amirs of Afghanistan. Elphinstone gives an amusing picture of the ancient ceremonial: 'The ambassador to be introduced is brought into court by two officers, who hold him firmly by the arms: on coming in sight of

the king, who appears at a high window, the ambassador is made to run forward for a certain distance, when he stops for a moment and prays for the king. He is then made to run forward again, and prays once more, and after another run the king calls out " Khillat ", a dress, which is followed by the Turkish word, " Getshin," begone, from an Officer of State, and the unfortunate ambassador is made to run out of the court, and sees no more of the king, unless summoned to a private audience.' Needless to say, Elphinstone did not conform to this ancient etiquette; he was received with courtesy and dignity. He has recorded his impressions of the Shah : ' It will scarcely be believed of an Eastern monarch how much he had the manners of a gentleman, or how well he preserved his dignity, while he seemed only anxious to please.' Elphinstone did not see more than the borders of Afghanistan, but he acquired a good deal of information through his usual practice of mixing and conversing with all classes of people : he was especially charmed with the conversation of two Afghan gentlemen he met, one of whom astonished him with his knowledge of European history and politics, and the other by his taste for mathematics and his acquisition of Sanskrit, which he was learning solely in order to discover the treasures of Hindu learning. He was also pleased with the civility he and his party received from the country people, who constantly pressed them to partake of hospitality, and would take no refusal. In the light of the various expeditions that have been forced on the British Government by the raids of the border tribes round and about Peshawar on to British territory in these later days, it is interesting to record the remark of an Afghan chief to Elphinstone on the characteristics of the people generally : ' We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood ; but we will never be content with a master.' The British Government has ever shown great patience in dealing with these border tribes, but cannot be content with discord, or alarms, or bloodshed in its own territories, and expeditions against them have from time to time been inevitable. A proverb current among these people, which was recently quoted by *The Times*, proves that they are

the first to acknowledge the justice of this : 'The patience of the British Government is as long as a summer day, but its arm is as long as a winter night.' The mission was eventually broken up at Delhi, and Elphinstone was ordered to Calcutta, where he presented his report.

Elphinstone was next appointed Resident at the court of Puna, an appointment which he took up without much enthusiasm ; and he looked forward to retirement at the end of it. He had already shown that he was a diplomatist, he was now to show that he could be an administrator as well, and one of the first rank. On his voyage from Calcutta to Bombay by sea, he had Henry Martyn, the great missionary, as one of his fellow travellers. He thus describes him : 'He is an excellent scholar, and one of the mildest, cheerfullest, and pleasantest men I ever saw, who, though extremely religious, talks on all subjects, sacred and profane, and laughs and makes others laugh as heartily as he could do if he were an infidel.'

One of his first acts in his new appointment was to intervene on behalf of the class of Jaghirdars, the hereditary nobles of the Southern Mahratta country, who had received their grants of rent-free lands from the Mogul Emperors : the claim of the Peshwa to their military service was acknowledged, but they were guaranteed against further exactions by a pledge of security from the British Government. The Chief of Kolhapur was at the same time recognized as an independent sovereign in return for his surrender of a fort and harbour in the Konkan, which had long been a nest of pirates. On one of his marches he came across an extraordinary scene : 'A manservant of a Mahratta gentleman, in performance of a vow for a child, was rolling along the road from Puna to Pandarpur : he had been a month at it, and had become so expert that he went on smoothly and without pausing, and kept rolling evenly along the middle of the road over stones and everything ; he travelled at the rate of eight miles a day.' Those who have lived much in the country districts of India are not unacquainted with similar instances of religious zeal : pilgrims walking backwards from one shrine to another, others measuring their length at every step along the road, may thus not uncommonly be met

with. He published his *History of Kabul* during this period of his career, a work which cost him immense labour, and which still remains the standard authority on Afghanistan. He led a very simple life, and his diet was spare almost to austerity: while his lunch consisted of a few sandwiches and figs, and a glass of water, he often dined off a few potatoes, and a glass or two of claret; he never neglected either his long ride in the morning and his gymnastic exercises twice a day, or his private reading in the afternoons; public business occupied his mornings.

With the appointment of Lord Moira, afterwards the Marquis of Hastings, to the head of affairs, a more vigorous policy in connexion with the Native States was inaugurated. The Governor-General determined to crush the great predatory hordes of Pindaris that were the primary cause of the suffering and anarchy prevailing over a very large portion of the Deccan. They were largely encouraged and supported by the Mahratta Princes; and there were not wanting signs that these princes themselves were becoming restless, and anxious to try conclusions again with the British. Elphinstone had organized an intelligence department of his own, and knew all that was going on, even to the colour of the javelin carried by the news-writers whom he found were being utilized to convey correspondence between the several Mahratta courts from the head quarters at Puna. Each court had its distinctive colour painted on the javelins carried by its messengers: it was a sort of livery and was recognized as such by the officials of the several princes; similar javelins were used by the bankers of the different cities in the Native States, but they were for the most part painted in one colour. The system of news-writers is a very ancient one in the East, and to this day there is not a family of any eminence in India that has not its own service. Elphinstone describes the precautions that he found it necessary to observe in connexion with all official correspondence at this critical time: 'All correspondence had to be written on the smallest slips of paper rolled up and conveyed in quills, like Birhis.' The usual form in which tobacco is smoked in Central India is a kind of tobacco-leafed cigarette, called a Birhi.

The crisis arrived at last in connexion with a man named Trimbakji Danglia, one of the favourites of Baji Rao: he had been a menial servant whom Baji Rao had raised to the rank of a minister. This man had barbarously murdered an envoy from the Baroda State who was travelling under a safe-conduct from the British Government. Elphinstone demanded his surrender, and the Peshwa had only acceded to the demand after Elphinstone had moved up a strong body of troops. Trimbakji was imprisoned in a fort, and a European guard placed in charge. He managed to escape, and a romantic story is attached to the manner of his escape. A Mahratta groom took service with an officer of the garrison, and while daily walking his master's horse up and down under the windows of the fort, used to recite a chant: the English sentry of course could not understand the tenor of it: the prisoner learnt from it that arrangements were in progress for his escape. When all was ready, a hole was dug through the wall, and Trimbakji escaped, and took refuge among the mountains of the Western Ghats. A Mahratta ballad, which is still sung by wandering bards who may be met with all over the Deccan, tells, with picturesque additions, the romantic story. Trimbakji was subsequently recaptured, but only after the close of the war, of which he was a primary cause, and was again imprisoned: this time at the Chunar Fort on the Ganges. Some years afterwards he was visited by Bishop Heber, who has thus versified the chant of the Mahratta groom:—

Behind the bush the bowmen hide,
  The horse beneath the tree:
Where shall I find a Knight will ride
  The jungle paths with me?
There are five and fifty coursers there,
  And four and fifty men:
When the fifty-fifth shall mount his steed,
  The Deccan thrives again.

With Trimbakji's escape, in the autumn of 1816, the crisis again became acute. Elphinstone was informed that the Peshwa was collecting forces at a Temple of Mahadeo, the National Deity of the Mahrattas, somewhere in the

hills, and he also received the still more disquieting information that a general rising was in contemplation. While addressing remonstrances to the Peshwa, Elphinstone went on with his military preparations, as he felt that at any moment disturbances might break out : indeed, they very nearly did break out on the very night of the day on which the Peshwa had apparently submitted to Elphinstone's demands. He was playing cards when an officer reported that Puna was full of armed men and that the Peshwa was in full Darbar discussing with his nobles the question of immediate war. For a moment the idea was conceived of attacking the city at once from the British cantonments : but fortunately his usual coolness did not forsake Elphinstone : he decided to wait for the morning. The Peshwa, it transpired, could not summon up courage to give the signal for attack, and so the danger passed, but temporarily only. Elphinstone, however, realized that the time for action had arrived, and he resolved to issue his ultimatum, without waiting for a reply to the dispatches he had sent to Calcutta on the situation. His personal courage at this crisis may be illustrated from the fact that he visited the Peshwa in person the night before he issued his ultimatum, knowing full well the risk he was running in doing so. But he could not help liking Baji Rao, with all his faults, and he has thus recorded his feelings on the occasion : 'I thought it possible that in these extremities he might seize me for a hostage, and carry me off to Singarh, but he seemed not to have the most distant thought that way: with all his crimes and all his perfidy, I shall be sorry if Baji Rao throws away his sovereignty.' The Peshwa accepted the ultimatum, and agreed to surrender three important forts, as securities for the capture of Trimbakji within a month. Meanwhile the expected dispatches from the Governor-General arrived : these imposed still harder terms. A new Treaty was to be signed, the Peshwa was to renounce all claim to the titular headship of the Mahratta Confederacy, and to acknowledge his entire dependence upon the British Government : he was further required to surrender territory for the maintenance of the subsidiary force, and to acknowledge on the face of the Treaty his belief in Trimbakji's guilt. These humiliating conditions,

however, were to be insisted on only in the event of the Peshwa taking no active measures for the arrest of Trimbakji. The Peshwa would do nothing in this direction, and so Elphinstone had no alternative but to force the Treaty upon him. The Peshwa signed it, but both parties to it were fully aware that only the military superiority of the British would secure its fulfilment, and that that military superiority would very shortly be put to the test. It was to be shown once for all who were to be the supreme Power in India, the Mahrattas, or the British.

The war that ensued is known in history as the third Mahratta War. It was the great Pindari Hunt, as Elphinstone called it, which had been organized by the Marquis of Hastings for the final suppression of these predatory hordes, that eventually brought the British into collision with the Mahrattas. And the war owes its real importance to the part played in it by the Peshwa, the Raja of Nagpur, and Holkar of Indore. Malcolm had been specially deputed by the Governor-General to visit these princes, that he might have the opportunity of consulting the Residents at their courts, and of reassuring the minds of the princes. He thus visited the court of the Peshwa, and he seems to have placed more confidence in his protestations of fidelity than Elphinstone had done: he even went so far as to reverse much of the latter's policy. Elphinstone, though he doubted the wisdom of Malcolm's acts, loyally supported him, as he knew he was acting under superior orders. Events proved that Elphinstone was right, and Malcolm wrong in his estimate of the Peshwa's character. Within two months of Malcolm's departure from Puna the crisis arrived. The Peshwa began ostentatiously to prepare for war, and Elphinstone was obliged to order back to Puna the British forces which had been sent away by Malcolm; he had the cantonments removed to the high ground overlooking the city of Puna. With his usual courage, he remained at the Residency, though he was well aware of the plot formed by some of the Peshwa's followers for his assassination. The Peshwa then openly demanded the withdrawal of the British troops; Elphinstone sent him a pacific message, saying that he was still anxious for peace, but that, if the Mahratta forces advanced, he

would attack them. The Peshwa's reply was to move his troops out in the direction of the new cantonments: this of course meant war. Elphinstone had barely time to escape from the Residency simply 'with the clothes on his back' before the whole of it was in a blaze. All his personal effects, including his valuable library, were burnt. The battle that ensued, known as the battle of Kirki, resulted in the dispersal of the Mahratta army. The Peshwa fled from his capital, which he was never destined to see again. Desultory fighting still went on for some five months. One incident occurred during this period which Elphinstone has described as 'a strong incitement never to despair': this was the heroic stand made by a small body of Sepoys under a few British officers at a place called Koregaum, against the whole Mahratta army. The incident is thus described: 'The detachment had been marching all night when it found itself face to face with the enemy; Baji Rao himself with his sardars sat on a hill two miles off to watch the battle; it lasted throughout the whole day and part of the next night; and just as the situation seemed most desperate, the Mahratta army drew off, alarmed at the approach of a British general with the main body of the British army.' The Peshwa finally surrendered to Malcolm. Elphinstone had meanwhile been protecting the city of Puna from the vengeance of his own Sepoys, thus, as he remarked, 'maintaining our general reputation and conciliating friends.' At the close of the campaign Elphinstone issued a proclamation to the people of the Deccan, in which he recited the story of the perfidy of the Peshwa, which had compelled the British to drive him from his throne, and he stated that a portion of his territory would be reserved for the Raja of Sattara. Mr. Canning, in moving a vote of thanks to the Marquis of Hastings and the Army, after the conclusion of the war, paid a special tribute to Elphinstone's services: 'On that, and not on that occasion only, but on many others in the course of this singular campaign, Mr. Elphinstone displayed talents and resources which would have rendered him no mean general in a country where generals are of no mean excellence and reputation.'

Elphinstone was appointed Commissioner of the Deccan

early in 1818; and pending the complete restoration of civil authority he had the pleasing task of formally restoring the young Raja of Sattara to the throne of Sivaji. The Marquis of Hastings had left it to Elphinstone whether to give a sovereignty or simply a jaghir, or grant of rent-free lands; Elphinstone had chosen to make a king. He did not regret his choice; the young prince had many good qualities which attracted Elphinstone, and he formed a good opinion both of his business capacity and of his character in these early days. The young prince, more-over, showed himself eager to requite the good will shown him. Elphinstone gives a pleasing picture of his daily routine: 'He had invited me to visit him in his private office; he produced his civil and criminal register, and his minute of revenue demands, collections, and balances for the last quarter, and began explaining the state of his country as eagerly as a young collector; he always sits in his court of justice, and conducts his business with the utmost regularity; he has his country in excellent order, and everything, to his roads and aqueducts, in a style that would do credit to a European. The furniture in his private sitting-room is extremely simple; it contains a single table covered with green velvet, at which the descendant of Sivaji sits and writes letters, as well as a journal of his transactions, with his own hand. He gave me at parting the celebrated Bagh Nakh, or tiger's claws, with which Sivaji had slain Afzul Khan.' His conduct in the hunting-field one day especially struck Elphinstone, who thus records it: 'A young gentleman just in front of me had a bad fall, and lay for dead. When I got off, I found a horseman dismounted and supporting his head, and, to my surprise, it was the Raja who had let his horse go, and run to his assistance.'

In his settlement of the new country, Elphinstone thought it his first duty to preserve as much as possible of the existing system of administration as the best for the circumstances, and for the time, though not ideally the best. He knew that British Courts of Law and Regulations would ultimately have to be introduced, but he was desirous of postponing their introduction, and of developing in the meantime all that could be discovered of good in the

native institutions. He used to tell a story to illustrate the dread which British Courts of Law and Regulations used to inspire in the early days of the introduction of British rule in a newly acquired Province, and before the people had grown familiarized with British justice and impartiality: 'When the North-West was first annexed, the inhabitants of a newly occupied village were encountered in full flight: asked if Lord Lake was coming, they replied, "No, the Adalat is coming."' The Adalat was the British Tribunal, now represented by the Civil Courts. The task that Elphinstone had before him was the twofold one of conciliation and inquiry. Like his two great contemporaries, Munro and Malcolm, the leading principles of his administration were sympathy and a general recognition of native prejudices and native aspirations. He ever kept before himself the duty of investigating thoroughly the indigenous institutions, and the importance of introducing as few changes as possible.

Much tact was necessary on Elphinstone's part in dealing with the different classes in the country, to enable him to arrive at a satisfactory settlement. He had already shown that he had no intention of disregarding Mahratta sentiment, so far as the way had been prepared by the cessation of organized opposition on the part of the people; at the same time he knew that he could not expect the contented acquiescence of all in the new state of affairs. The cultivators had indeed accepted the position with their usual phlegm, but there were plenty of men, who had been officials under the old régime, who were ready to use their influence against active contentment on their part. Elphinstone did his best to relieve this class from the excessive demands they had been accustomed to, and especially to do away with that engine of exaction, the farming system. There was not much difficulty experienced with the more important class of the landed proprietors, the greater Jaghirdars: Elphinstone had at an earlier period interested himself in establishing their status on a satisfactory footing; he had, however, to bring special tact to bear upon one member of this class, whom he described as a man 'possessing a narrow and crooked understanding, a litigious spirit, and a capricious temper'; it says much for Elphinstone's

conciliatory powers that his talk with him completely restored his good humour, and made him apparently cordially satisfied. The case of the lesser Jaghirdars, however, caused him much thought and anxiety; he wished, as far as he could, to preserve their status as an upper class intermediate between the cultivators and the officials, and to prevent their decay, though he saw that in most cases this was inevitable. He succeeded in obtaining many privileges for this class, which they specially valued: one of these was their exemption from the ordinary procedure of the Civil Courts, and making them subject in criminal matters to the jurisdiction of the collector, in his capacity as political agent, after previous references to the commissioner. The most difficult class of all whom Elphinstone had to deal with were the Mahratta Brahmans. From having been the recognized depositaries of learning they had become practically mendicants, living on the bounty of the Peshwa, who used to distribute amongst them £50,000 a year. In a country where mendicancy is recognized as one of the honourable professions, this had not diminished their old influence in the country. Elphinstone described them as being generally discontented and only restrained by fear from being treasonable; of course there were exceptions, and Elphinstone was able to say: 'There are among them many instances of decent and respectable lives, and although they are generally subtle and insincere, I have met with some upon whom I could depend for sound and candid opinions.' Conspicuous generosity marked Elphinstone's treatment of this class: he publicly proclaimed that they would be allowed quiet possession of their lands and pecuniary allowances, and he distributed liberal alms amongst them. And yet it was from this class that the only serious attempt came to overthrow British rule. Elphinstone discovered that they had formed a plot to massacre all Europeans, to seize all hill forts, and to get possession of the person of the young Raja of Sattara. He showed them then that he could be as righteously stern as he had been conspicuously generous: he had the leading conspirators blown from guns. Of this mode of execution Elphinstone said: 'It contained two valuable elements of capital punishment: it is painless

to the criminal and terrible to the beholder.' The then Governor of Bombay suggested that Elphinstone should get an indemnity for his act from the Supreme Government; to this his characteristic reply was: 'If I have done wrong, I deserve to be punished: if I have done right, I do not require an indemnity.'

In his inquiries into police matters, he was very favourably impressed with the indigenous system of village watch and ward. Much responsibility attached to the office of village watchman: he required to be a man of much acuteness of character, with keen powers of inquisitiveness and observation, for one of his duties was to know the character of every man in the village. In the department of criminal justice, Elphinstone found a state of things prevailing which he could only describe as beggaring description: there was no recognized code of law, and no prescribed form of trial; all the revenue officers had judicial powers; punishments were left more or less to the caprice of the officials, with the natural result that 'some were too dreadful to be inflicted, and others were too trifling to be deterrent'. Elphinstone took care to introduce his reforms with scrupulous regard, as far as possible, to native sentiment and prejudices. With the exception of capital punishment, all criminal jurisdiction was vested in the collector; Elphinstone also made several suggestions on the subject of imprisonment, many of which formed a model for future action. In the department of civil justice, Elphinstone found no regular judicial officers, except in the great towns, where an official styled 'President of Equity', tried cases in the name of the Peshwa. The old primitive system of the Panchayat, or 'Council of Five Members', was, however, in full force in all the country districts. He recognized the respect for the authority of this Council as one of the fundamental principles that held Hindu society together; he mentions an old proverb in illustration of this: 'Panchayat men Parameshwar,' 'The Lord is in the Council of Five.' Its special advantage to him lay in the consideration that the interest of the people was enlisted in ascertaining and protecting their own rights, while litigiousness was not encouraged. He did his best therefore to preserve this

old institution while ridding it of some of its objectionable features; he arranged that an appeal should lie to the collector from a decision of the Council, but only in a case of gross corruption or injustice: the object of this appeal being rather to watch over the purity of the court than to amend its decisions.

After he had held office as Commissioner of the Deccan for rather more than a year, Elphinstone received the higher appointment of Governor of Bombay. This appointment was the tribute which the British Government paid to the exceptional ability he had displayed during his career in India; a similar tribute was paid to Munro, who became Governor of Madras, and to Malcolm, who succeeded Elphinstone in the Governorship of Bombay. The new Province that Elphinstone had been administering was, moreover, about to be incorporated in the Presidency of Bombay, and it was considered desirable to have the benefit of his experience while the incorporation was taking effect, and a new and larger Presidency being created. Elphinstone bade farewell to the Deccan in these terms: 'I feel a sort of respect, as well as attachment, for this fine picturesque country, which I am leaving for the flat and crowded roads of Bombay, and I cannot but think with affectionate regret of the romantic scenes and manly sports of the Deccan.' He characteristically concluded with a classical quotation from the Idylls of Theocritus:—

Oh! farewell to wolves, and jackals, and bears,
Ye denizens wild of the jungles and hills,
In brake, and in grove, in the forests' deep shade
A herdsman and huntsman, no more shall I roam.
Oh! Ye springs and ye rivers! a long farewell.

Bishop Heber, that acute observer of men and things, has left on record his impressions of Elphinstone as Governor of Bombay: 'No Government in India pays so much attention to schools and public institutions for education; in none are the taxes lighter, and in the administration of justice to the natives in their own languages, in the establishment of Panchayats, in the degree in which he employs the natives in official situations, and the countenance and familiarity he extends to all the natives of rank who

approach him, he seems to have reduced to practice almost all the reforms which had struck me as most required in the system of government in those Provinces of our Eastern Empire which I had previously visited. All other public men had their enemies and their friends, but of Mr. Elphinstone everybody spoke highly.' During his eight years' rule he visited every part of his large charge twice. The British districts gave him but little trouble. During his tours in the Native States he did his best to minimize some of the inevitable hardships incidental to the inauguration of a reign of law and order, succeeding a more or less free and independent régime under which every man did what was right in his own eyes. He was glad to find, however, that on the whole the introduction of the British Courts of Justice was not unpopular with the people generally. To make them more popular, he had Guzerati substituted for Persian in the courts of the extreme west of his Province, where Guzerati was the vernacular of the people, and by removing the Civil Court from Bombay to Surat he rendered it easier for the people to settle their civil disputes.

Press criticism could be as embarrassing to a Ruler in those days as in these, but Government had its own way of dealing with any editor who over-stepped the limits of what was considered legitimate criticism. The Press was not the free and independent agent it now is; and Elphinstone found it necessary to deport the editor of a local paper in consequence of his strictures on the judges of the High Court. Prestige has always gone for much in the East; and the maintenance of British prestige, and especially the prestige of British Courts of Justice, was almost a matter of life and death in those early days of the establishment of British rule; and Elphinstone considered his action fully justified by these considerations.

One subject that Elphinstone had always had at heart was the preparation of a complete digest of Hindu Civil Law, based partly upon the written books and partly upon existing customs. It proved a task beyond even his great powers and knowledge; and none knew the real difficulties better than himself, as a letter he wrote to a celebrated jurist shows: 'The written law was that of the Hindus,

always vague and unknown to the bulk of the people, often absurd, and still oftener entirely disused. The unwritten law was composed of the maxims that occur to people of common sense in a country not remarkably enlightened, modified by Hindu law and Hindu opinion, and constantly influenced by the direct lawful interference of the prince, who was the fountain of all law, and by the weight of rank, and wealth, and interest. Besides, what we call Hindu law applies to the Brahmans only; each caste has separate laws and customs of its own, and even these vary according to the part of the country in which the different portions of a caste are settled.' The task was entrusted to a committee, and it must have appeared from the very outset a hopeless one. Notwithstanding, immense labour was expended on the work, and a vast mass of information collected and embodied in reports; a Sanskrit work on inheritance was, moreover, translated; eventually, however, the scheme in its entirety was dropped when Elphinstone left Bombay.

Elphinstone was a great advocate for the admission of Indians to high office, and he looked forward to the time when Indians would be found eligible for the Council of the Governor-General. Though his schemes did not come to fruition during his tenure of office, still under the liberal policy that has actuated successive Rulers of India, most of them did before his death: the path of distinction has been gradually opened, until at the present day Indians are found in the highest offices, and drawing salaries far greater than Elphinstone ever dreamed of; and not only are they found in the Council of the Governor-General, but in that of the Secretary of State for India in England itself, and immediately under the aegis of the British Parliament.

In Elphinstone's time education was the great difficulty: he wrote several minutes on the subject, and most of the schemes he propounded have been put into operation since his day. He has been called the founder of that system of instruction both in the Vernacular and in English that has given the Bombay Presidency the high place it holds among the other Provinces of the Indian Empire. He saw clearly that in education lay the best hope of amelior-

ating the condition of the people of India, both materially and morally. The problem that has taxed the minds of all Rulers of India, how best to promote morality and to find the teaching of morality a place in any scheme of general education for the people, also presented itself to his mind ; and he looked at the subject from the point of view of a philosopher. While realizing that morality must finally rest upon the sanctions of religion, he also realized how impossible it was for a British Government to be otherwise than neutral in the sphere of religion. His own idea of how the problem might possibly be solved is given in an extract from one of his Minutes on Education : 'It would be better to call the prejudices of the Hindus to our aid in reforming them, and to control their vices by the ties of religion, which are stronger than those of law. By maintaining and purifying their present tenets, at the same time that we enlighten their understandings, we shall bring them nearer to that standard of perfection at which all concur in desiring that they should arrive.' He suggested the printing and cheap distributing of Hindu tales inculcating sound morals, and also religious books tending more directly to the same end. It will be seen that he had Hindus only in his mind ; the reason is not far to seek. Muhammadans, who have a recognized Canon of Scripture, have always cared for the education of their children in the religious tenets of their fathers. Hindus, who have no such recognized Canon, have not been in times past so careful in this direction. It is of interest, therefore, to note that in more recent years there has been a decided movement amongst them for having their sons at school taught the faith of their fathers. Textbooks, such as Elphinstone recommended, have been prepared, some on orthodox lines, others on theosophical lines, and are in use in not a few schools in different parts of India. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that morality has always been taught indirectly in Hindu families. The traditions and tales interspersed in their great epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, with which the minds and imaginations of children are stirred from their infancy, all inculcate a high ethical standard, and practically form the basis of their moral education.

After an unbroken service of thirty years, Elphinstone felt that his work was done: in 1826, therefore, he resigned office. Of the addresses that poured in, as usual with a departing Governor, the one that Elphinstone most valued was the Indian address announcing the foundation of the Elphinstone Institution in his honour. This address concluded with these words: 'Having beheld with admiration for so long a period the affable and encouraging manners, the freedom from prejudice, the consideration at all times evinced for the interests and welfare of the people of this country, the regard shown to their ancient customs and laws, the constant endeavours to extend amongst them the inestimable advantages of intellectual and moral improvement, the commanding abilities applied to ensure permanent amelioration in the condition of all classes, and to promote their prosperity on the soundest principles, by which your private and public conduct has been so pre-eminently distinguished, we are led to consider the influence of the British Government as the most important and desirable blessing which the Superior Being could have bestowed upon our native land.'

With this recognition of the benign rule of the British Government, due to a highly-gifted and exceptional man having made himself the personal embodiment of that benign rule, this sketch now concludes.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE LIBERATOR OF THE INDIAN PRESS

### Sir Charles Metcalfe, 1785–1846.

Charles Metcalfe was the son of a Major Metcalfe who had made a fortune in India during the early days of the Company's rule. He had returned to England, and became a director of the East India Company, and was afterwards created a baronet. Charles was born in Calcutta, but was sent to England to be educated at Eton. His tastes at school ran in a literary direction rather than towards athletics. The ordinary school curriculum of Latin and Greek failed to satisfy his ambition, and as there were many vacant hours in the Eton of those days, he utilized them by studying modern languages, and acquired sufficient proficiency in French and Italian to be able to read books in those languages.

In the early days of British rule in India, men went out to India young. Metcalfe was no exception to this rule. He was only fifteen when his father obtained a writership in Bengal for him. He did not like leaving Eton, but he acceded to his father's wish, and duly proceeded to India, and arrived in that country early in 1801, being then only sixteen. The Marquis Wellesley, who was Governor-General at the time, realized the dangers and temptations surrounding the youngsters who were being sent out to India fresh from the wholesome discipline of school into an atmosphere so entirely different, and into a society whose tone was not always of the highest at this period of Anglo-Indian history. It was on their behalf, therefore, that he conceived the plan of a residential college, with the view of giving them a good start in their new careers. 'The college was to be,' he wrote, 'a place where the writers on their first arrival in India, should be subjected for a period of two or three years to rules and discipline, and where the languages and laws of the country might be

studied, and habits of activity, regularity, and decency might be formed, instead of those of sloth, indolence, low debauchery, and vulgarity, which were too apt to grow on those young men who have been sent at an early age into the interior of the country, and have laid the foundation of their life and manners among the coarse vices and indulgence of those countries.' The Marquis was a man of high ideals and his influence was potent for good on those young civilians who had the good fortune to come within the sphere of that influence, and so many of whom afterwards became distinguished public servants. The college had a short career, as the directors did not sanction its up-keep: short as that career was, some distinguished names appeared on its rolls, and first amongst these was that of Charles Metcalfe. The conception of the Marquis Wellesley had given the directors a hint: they also began to realize that there was much 'to seek' in the education of young civilians, and Haileybury College was the outcome of their deliberations. As the hot weather came on, young Metcalfe, like many a man destined to achieve fame in India, before and after him, began to grow weary of the country, and he wrote to his father begging to be allowed to return home and to be put into any place, however small, in some public office. His mother, fortunately for Metcalfe, appears to have been a woman of no ordinary common sense, and it is recorded that 'her only reply to his letter was the dispatch of a box of pills, she realized that he was suffering from a temporary depression of spirits, with the pills she also gave him some excellent advice': 'You will probably laugh,' she wrote to him, 'at my sending you the pills, but I think you are bilious, and they will be of great service: you study too much: you should dissipate a little. On account of your health you should relax. Ride on horseback. When intense thinking is joined with the want of exercise, the consequences must be bad.' Similarly it is recorded that his father, who knew what the Indian climate was, wrote and told him of his own experiences, 'how one morning in a fit of bile, he waited upon his commanding officer with an intention of resigning the service, and returning to England, but that, fortunately for him, the conversation

at breakfast took a pleasant turn, and a hearty fit of laughter got the better of his blue devils, and he returned to his quarters with a determination to persevere.' Want of occupation had doubtless had much to do with this temporary depression: it had all passed off before the end of the year when the first summons came to him to enter the arena of active employment. The Marquis, who was a good judge of character, had noted the latent capacity of the youngster, and gave him the appointment of assistant to the Resident at the court of Scindia.

The Governor-General had recently left Calcutta for a tour up country, and Metcalfe obtained permission, after proceeding some distance on his way, to join his camp, and accompany it as far as Lucknow. He had doubtless, in his boyhood, dreamt, as many another boy has done, of the romance and splendour of 'the gorgeous East', and it is recorded that in the court of the King of Oudh at Lucknow, he found that 'the reality even exceeded the romance of his dreams, everything recalled to his imagination the *Arabian Nights*'. He had not yet had time to see behind the scenes. He did not remain long at the court of Scindia: he resigned his post there as he was unable to hit it off with his chief, the Resident, who, from the sobriquet he had earned of 'King Collins', must have been what in Indian parlance is known as 'a bit of a Bahadur'. Given an hereditary tendency this way, a long career in the East, unbroken by an occasional wholesome visit to the old country, will tend to intensify such a domineering disposition: this wholesome break in the continuity of a life under Oriental conditions, was not always possible at this period of British rule in India. Metcalfe left Scindia's court, and returned to Calcutta again.

In returning to Calcutta, Metcalfe was fortunate enough to get a place, in what was styled 'Lord Wellesley's Office', among a number of other young civilians: he was thus brought directly within the sphere of influence of that distinguished man: and the experience he thus gained was to stand him in good stead. He was engaged in this pleasant duty for some two years. Apart from his recognition of his young assistant's abilities, the Governor-

General had another reason for being willing to advance his interests: Metcalfe's father was one of the few Directors who steadily supported his policy. This may or may not have weighed with him, but even the greatest of men are only human after all: anyhow, Metcalfe found himself, at the age of nineteen, appointed to the congenial post of political assistant to Lord Lake, who was in command of the military operations against the Mahrattas in that portion of the country lying between the Jumna and the Ganges.

It illustrates the disturbed state of the country at the time to find it recorded that on his way up country to join his appointment, young Metcalfe was attacked, robbed, and badly wounded by a party of armed Dakaits, or highway robbers. Some time elapsed, while he was being nursed back to health, before he could join the British camp. Lord Lake had no great desire to have men about him, while on active service, who wielded the pen: he thought they were out of place in the field. It was a dictum of his, as has been recorded, that men of the sword 'should mind their fighting and not their writing', similarly he held that men of the pen 'should mind their writing and not their fighting'. There was some excuse for him: the Great Duke had not then written his dispatches, nor was the poet born who has thus sung of 'the quill-driving Clerk':—

I maintain my friend of Plassey proved a warrior every whit
Worth your Alexanders, Caesars, Marlboroughs, and, what said Pitt?
Frederick the fierce himself.

Anyhow, his opinions being what they were, it was not surprising that Lord Lake did not welcome very cordially the arrival in his camp of the young civilian: but Metcalfe was soon to show him that he could wield the sword with the best of his soldiers. And the story of how he did this is thus told: 'An opportunity soon came. The army was before the strong fortress of Deeg. The storming party was told off, and the non-combatant clerk volunteered to accompany it. He was one of the first to enter the

breach. This excited the admiration of the old general, who made most honourable mention of him in his dispatch, and ever afterwards throughout the campaign spoke of him as his "little stormer".' Indeed, his gallantry on this occasion was never forgotten: at the great banquet that was given to him on the eve of his leaving India for good the toast that was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm was 'Charles Metcalfe, the soldier of Deeg'. Towards the end of the campaign, Metcalfe was sent on a special mission to Holkar to convey assurances of British friendship and goodwill. It is recorded that 'he accomplished this task with temper and tact': and it required an exercise of such qualities, for the great Pathan leader, Amir Khan, was at the meeting, and was somewhat inclined to be insolent to the youthful English diplomatist: Metcalfe, however, practically ignored him, and confined his conversation to Holkar.

Metcalfe's next appointment was that of assistant to the Resident at Delhi, a Colonel Seton. He was a man of a different type from 'King Collins', and carried the courtesy and politeness that is said to have distinguished him rather to excess: indeed his bearing towards the old Mogul Emperor, Shah Alam, approached to obsequiousness; but doubtless the blindness and general helplessness of the aged monarch appealed to his sense of chivalry. In 1808, the then Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, resolved to send missions to the various princes on the frontiers of India with the view of checkmating the anticipated hostile aggression of the Russian and French sovereigns, who had, only in the previous year, formed an alliance together at Tilsit: and it was suspected that an invasion of India was amongst their plans. A poet has given expression to these not unnatural fears:—

> The life-time long alliance Russia swore
> At Tilsit, for the English Realm's undoing.

Metcalfe was selected to proceed to the court of the Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh. Considering that he was only twenty-three at the time, it says much for the reputation he had already gained with the Government that he should have been so selected: as events proved, his selection was fully justified.

At the first meeting between the young envoy and Ranjit Singh, courtesies only were exchanged. It is interesting to note as going to show how in many respects conditions are much the some now as they were then, that chairs were borrowed from the English camp to enable Ranjit Singh and his Sardars to do honour to their visitors by adopting the European custom of sitting on chairs: the old and more comfortable attitude of reclining on the Gadi, the pillowed couch, is still in force among the Indian potentates when receiving visitors from among their own countrymen. The Maharaja made one notable pronouncement at this first meeting. A courtier having remarked that the British Government was known for its good faith, the Maharaja replied that 'the word of the British Government included everything'. The great ambition of the Sikh Ruler at this time was to be recognized as the sovereign ruler over the whole Sikh population on both sides of the Sutlej. This was always in his view whenever he was pressed to make a Treaty of alliance. The British Government could naturally not grant this: it would have entailed their desertion of the cause of the great Sikh houses on the hither side of the Sutlej, to whom they stood in the light of protectors. Under such circumstances negotiations were naturally protracted: but Metcalfe never lost patience, though the suspicious bearing of the Sikh ruler on all occasions might very well have led a less patient man to do so. This patience eventually won the day. Metcalfe had had occasion one day to tell the Maharaja very plainly that the Governor-General would never dream of sacrificing the chiefs on the hither side of the Sutlej to his ambition. The effect of this frank declaration on Ranjit Singh has been thus recorded: 'Ranjit left the room, descended to the courtyard below, mounted a horse, and began caracolling about with what the young English envoy described as "surprising levity". But it was not levity. He was striving to subdue his strong feelings, and was gaining time to consider the answer he was to give the British envoy. After a while he returned to another room, and took counsel with his ministers, who, when they rejoined Metcalfe, told him that the Raja would consent to all the demands of the British Government.'

At this point, however, and just as success seemed to have been achieved, negotiations were very nearly being broken off altogether: the Raja wished to withdraw his words almost as soon as he had uttered them; and only the firmness of the young envoy prevented this. Had they been broken off at this stage, nothing could have prevented war, as the Raja would have liked nothing better than a throw with the British. At last, early in 1809, an incident occurred that finally decided Ranjit Singh to sign the desired Treaty of Alliance. The Maharaja had been wanting to test the qualities of British soldiers. And one day in February, it is recorded, he had the opportunity of doing so: 'Metcalfe's escort of British Sepoys came into collision at Amritsar, with a party of Akalis, Sikh fanatics, half soldiers and half saints. There was a sharp conflict between them: but after a little while, the steady discipline of the little band of trained soldiers prevailed, and the Sikhs broke and fled. This appears to have made a great impression on Ranjit's mind. He saw clearly that the English, who could make such good soldiers of men not naturally warlike, were a people not to be despised.' The Treaty that was at last concluded was faithfully observed by Ranjit Singh to the day of his death, some thirty years later. The manner in which the young envoy had conducted the negotiations proved that he had in him the making of a statesman, and from that time his career was assured. He was personally thanked by Lord Minto, on behalf of the Government, in most flattering terms; what the great Sikh Maharaja himself thought of the young Englishman has been recorded in his own words: 'If their beardless young men are so wise, what must their old men be!'

Metcalfe's next appointment as Resident at the court of Scindia was not a congenial one, and he only held it for about a year. Lord Minto then conferred upon him one of the most important appointments in his gift—that of Resident of Delhi: he did so in these complimentary terms: 'I shall, with or without your consent, name you to the Residency of Delhi. I cannot find a better man in the list of the Company's servants, and hope therefore for your indulgence on this occasion.' Metcalfe felt very

much at this time the separation from all home ties which a long residence in India entails. In a letter he wrote to an aunt to dissuade her from sending her son out to India he thus gave expression to this feeling: 'I cannot say that I approve of the plan of sending children out to India for all their lives. There is no other service in which a man does not see his friends sometimes. Here it is perpetual banishment. I lead a vexatious and joyless life, and it is only the hope of home at last that keeps me alive and merry.'

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis:

India need no longer be the land of exile that it has sometimes been called: let a man only make up his mind to make it the country of his adoption during the years he is called upon to serve, and he need never fear that he will feel his life to be one of 'perpetual banishment'. The Englishman in India now has not only plenty of opportunities for leave home, and for keeping up his connexion with the life of the rest of his family at home, which opportunities, if he is wise, he will avail himself to the full of: but he also has abundant opportunities for relaxation in the congenial company of his countrymen. In Metcalfe's time, however, such amenities did not exist, and many men indeed remained in India for the whole of their service, as did Metcalfe himself, who never took a single day's leave out of India during his thirty-eight years' service; others only took leave after a quarter of a century's continuous service at least, as did Thomas Munro. Metcalfe was still at Delhi when the Marquis of Hastings came out to succeed Lord Minto as Governor-General of India.

The arrival of the Marquis of Hastings was the signal for a more active and vigorous policy being pursued towards the Native States. The policy of non-interference that had been inaugurated by the immediate successors of the Marquis Wellesley had not proved a success. The Mahrattas and the Pindaris had become increasingly aggressive, and it had become necessary to bring matters to a final issue, which should decide once for all the question of supremacy. The Governor-General wished to have a man

about him who knew something of these people, and he therefore appointed Metcalfe to the office of Political Secretary. Before he could be spared from Delhi, he had to settle certain matters that required very careful handling: he succeeded in bringing the Pathan chief, Amir Khan, whom he had once met at Indore, to terms: he also succeeded in bringing the great chiefs of Rajputana into friendly alliance with the Government. He was not called upon to take any part in the military operations, as his friend Malcolm was. He had first met Malcolm some eight years before in Lord Lake's camp, and he always looked back upon his conversations with him as having had a great influence in shaping his own career: the feature that had specially struck him in Malcolm's character was his enthusiasm; and he always used to say that any success he gained in after life was due to Malcolm having succeeded in infecting him with his own enthusiasm. It was with some regret that Metcalfe finally left Delhi to join his new appointment at the head quarters of the Government. He could, without undue boastfulness, claim that his administration of the Delhi territory had been a success. He himself has recorded how 'swords and other implements of intestine warfare to which the people were prone, were turned into ploughshares, not figuratively alone but literally also: villagers being made to give up their arms which were returned to them in the shape of implements of agriculture.'

Metcalfe did not feel altogether at home in his new sphere of work as Political Secretary: though his social position was a high one, he felt that he was doing only ministerial work. It is recorded that his old friend Sir John Malcolm, tried to console him and wrote to him as follows: 'Had I been near you, the King of Delhi should have been dissuaded from becoming an executive officer, and resigning power to jostle for influence. But you acted from high motives, and should not be dissatisfied with yourself.' However, he was not destined to be long without active political employment. On the important appointment of Resident at the court of the Nizam falling vacant, he was offered it, and at once accepted. The Governor-General wrote him a very cordial letter on his

appointment, assuring him of his best wishes for his welfare.

On arriving at Haidarabad, he found that his predecessor had somewhat misled him in letting it be supposed that he had an easy task before him. A sympathetic letter he received from Sir John Malcolm may be regarded as a measure of the difficulties that really confronted him, and which were to try to the utmost even his marvellous patience and endurance. The letter was thus worded :— 'Every step that you take to ameliorate the condition of the country will be misrepresented by fellows who have objects as incompatible with public virtue and good government, as darkness is with light. You have to fight the good fight and to stand with the resolute and calm feelings such a cause must inspire, against all species of attacks that artful and sordid men can make, or that weak and prejudiced men can support. I am quite confident in your ultimate triumph, though I expect that you will have great vexation and annoyance.' The Government of the Nizam had become heavily involved in debt, and in order to get means to carry on the Government at all, the Nizam's ministers had to have recourse to many oppressive measures; it was to be Metcalfe's mission to devise means to check this injustice and oppression whereby the very life of the people was being squeezed out of them. One proposal he made that he thought might help in bringing this desirable result about was, that the country should be divided into districts, and English assistants placed in charge : it was no part of his plan that they should supersede the regular officials of the Nizam, who were still to be held responsible for the collection of the revenue, and the general administration : they were to be there only for supervision and general control, as a check upon injustice or breach of faith : and when their work was done, they could be removed without the ordinary machinery of Government being put out of gear. It was a statesman-like idea, and worthy of the mind that conceived it. But he saw plainly that no real reform could be effected so long as the country was in the bonds of debt : these must be removed and the finances placed on a sounder footing. This then was the great problem before him ; and it was not made any

lighter for him by the fact that the debts, under which the State was burdened, were due to a great English Banking Company, with which a number of influential men were very closely connected. Metcalfe had to encounter very great opposition to the proposals he put forward for meeting the situation : one suggestion he made that a loan should be raised to be guaranteed by the Government, for the purpose of paying off the debts to the bank, was rejected. The struggle was a long one and in the course of it he was destined, as Malcolm had foreseen, to make many enemies, and temporarily even to estrange many friends. Among those who were thus for a time estranged was the Governor-General himself : but eventually he triumphed, and it was recognized, and by none more readily than by the Governor-General, that he had been actuated by no feelings of hostility against the firm, but only by a sincere wish to do what was right. His triumph, however, had been won at the cost of his health. He fell seriously ill, and was obliged to go to Calcutta to procure that medical aid he was sorely in need of.

After a stay of a few months in Calcutta, he returned to his post at Haidarabad. His troubles were now over, and his life was a tranquil one. He was ever ‘ on hospitable thoughts intent ’, and his house was open to all. There were times, however, when he longed for a little more privacy to enable him to prosecute his literary studies : such a country-house would have suited him to retire occasionally to, as Elphinstone built for himself outside Nagpur. He wrote a humorous letter on the subject to a friend : ‘ I feel the want of a country-house incessantly. As long as I live at the Residency, it will be a public-house, and as long as the billiard-table stands, the Residency will be a tavern. I wish that I could introduce a nest of white ants secretly, without any one's kenning thereof, if the said ants would devour the said table, and cause it to disappear.’ His happy disposition was very largely the outcome of a deep religious sense : he once gave expression to this feeling in one of his letters : ‘ I live in a state of frequent and incessant gratitude to God for the favours and mercies which I have experienced throughout my life.’

The attention of the new Governor-General, Lord

Amherst, had been called to the unrest that prevailed on the North-West confines of British territory. Bhurtpore was one of the places affected by this unrest. The old Raja had recently died, and a cousin had usurped the Gadi. The fortress had long had the reputation of being impregnable. Sir John Kaye has said thus of it: 'For more than twenty years it had seemed to snort defiance at the victorious Feringhi.' An expedition was decided on with the object of restoring the boy-prince, the rightful heir, to the throne. Metcalfe had been transferred from Haidarabad to Delhi to deal with the crisis: he had been instructed to see what diplomacy would do. Diplomacy failed, and so war was declared. Metcalfe was now placed in political control of the expedition that was dispatched against the fortress. As history has recorded Bhurtpore fell, and with its fall was removed for ever the reproach that the British would never be able to capture it. There was said to be a tradition among the people that Bhurtpore would never be captured till the Lord of the Crocodiles came up against it. When therefore Lord Combermere, or as he would be called in Oriental parlance, Kumbhir Mir, 'Prince of Crocodiles,' came against it, they recognized a fulfilment of the prophecy. The story 'se non è vero molto è ben trovato.' Metcalfe did not remain long at the Residency of Delhi. In 1827, he was offered and accepted a seat in the Supreme Council. His elder brother having recently died, he had succeeded to the baronetcy, and was now Sir Charles Metcalfe.

The Governor-General's council consisted in those days of the Governor-General himself, the commander-in-chief, and two covenanted civilians. Metcalfe had anticipated a certain amount of leisure in his new office, and Malcolm had written to him:—'If you are my "beau ideal" of a good Councillor, you content yourself with reading what comes before you, and writing a full minute now and then when the subject merits it: and do not fret yourself and perplex others by making much of small matters. Supposing this to be the case you must have leisure, and if I find you have, I must now and then intrude upon it.' He found, however, that he had even less leisure than formerly. After trying for some time, but without success, to make

a systematic distribution of his time, he wrote to a friend: 'I now go pell-mell at all in the ring.' Apart from his official duties, there were the social claims upon his time: he still kept up his old habit of hospitality on the grand scale. But he would never allow his hours of seclusion as he called his hours of work from breakfast to dinner, to be broken in upon. It was characteristic, however, of his kindly and genial nature that he broke this rule in favour of some of his friends' children, 'who,' he wrote, 'would trot up frequently to my loft in the third story, where I have my sitting-room, and library, and bedroom, and insist on my showing them my pictures, being privileged by infancy to supersede all affairs of every kind.' Ordinarily, Metcalfe's term of office would have expired when he had completed five years' tenure. This time arrived in 1832, when Lord William Bentinck was Governor-General. Lord William Bentinck had found in him a colleague after his own heart, and he wrote to the Board of Directors strongly recommending his retention in office, or at any rate, his being appointed to a post that would keep him near. The terms of the dispatch ran thus:—'Sir Charles Metcalfe will be a great loss to me. He quite ranks with Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, and Mr. Elphinstone: if it be intended, and the necessity cannot admit of a doubt, to form a second Local Government in Bengal, he undoubtedly ought to be at the head. I strongly recommend him, while he has always maintained perfect independence of character and conduct, he has been to me a most zealous supporter and friendly colleague.' As the result of this strong recommendation, Metcalfe's period of office in the Supreme Council was extended to 1834.

On the creation of the new Government of Agra, Metcalfe was appointed its first Governor, and at the same time he was nominated Provisional Governor-General of India to succeed on the death, or the resignation of Lord William Bentinck, in the event of an interregnum in the Government. He had only just taken up his new office, when the news reached him of the intended departure of Lord William Bentinck from India. He had to return to Calcutta at once. On handing over the reins of Government to the man who had been deputed temporarily to

hold them, Lord William Bentinck spoke of him in the following complimentary terms :—'My connexion with Sir Charles Metcalfe in Council during more than six years ought to make me the best of witnesses, unless indeed friendship should have blinded me and conquered my detestation of flattery, which I trust is not the case. I therefore unhesitatingly declare that, whether in public or in private life, I never met with the individual, whose integrity, liberality of sentiment, and delicacy of mind excited in a greater degree my respect and admiration. The State never had a more able or upright councillor, nor any Governor-General a more valuable and independent assistant and friend. Suffice it to express my sincere impression that among all the statesmen, who, since my first connexion with India, have best served their country, and have most exalted its reputation and interests in the East, Sir Arthur Wellesley, Elphinstone, Munro, and Malcolm, equal rank and equal honour ought to be given to Sir Charles Metcalfe.'

There were many who thought that Metcalfe would have received the substantive appointment of Governor-General of India : and this was said to have been the wish of the Directors. But the ministry of the day ruled that it was inadvisable for any servant of the Company to be appointed to the highest office of the Indian Government. As it was, a new precedent had been established in giving Indian Governorships to officers of the services, civil and military, who had worked their way up from the lowest grades, and it was only the distinguished merits of the men who were so honoured that had influenced Government in making that new departure. But beyond this the Government did not feel disposed to go. It was afterwards the good fortune of the first Lord Lawrence to show that there was no rule without an exception, and he was the first civilian to rise from the lowest grades in the Civil Service to the highest post in the gift of the Crown, the Vice-Royalty of India.

The chief feature of Metcalfe's brief administration was the liberation of the Indian Press. Though there had been little actual restriction on freedom of speech, still, as long as there existed a law which placed restrictions on

the liberty of the Press, complete freedom of speech could not be said to exist. Indeed, Elphinstone, when Governor of Bombay, had felt it incumbent on him to deport an editor for transgressing the limits of what he considered reasonable criticism. The only restriction that was afterwards imposed was a censorship, even this was finally done away with at a later date. Deportation has again had to be resorted to in these latter days, but only as a temporary measure, and not of an editor, but of a public agitator; the time being one of unrest and excitement, putting the safety of the State in peril, the circumstances demanded this action. When the dangerous excitement passed, Government exerted its prerogative of mercy, and withdrew the punishment. The words which Metcalfe wrote in justification of his measure for the complete emancipation of the Press mark the liberal-minded Statesman :—' If the argument of those who are opposed to this measure be that the spread of knowledge may eventually be fatal to our rule in India, I close with them on that point, and maintain that, whatever may be the consequences it is our duty to communicate the benefits of knowledge. If India could be preserved as a part of the British Empire only by keeping its inhabitants in a state of ignorance, our domination would be a curse to the country and ought to cease. But I see more ground for just apprehension in ignorance itself. I look to the increase of knowledge with a hope that it may strengthen our Empire, that it may remove prejudices, soften asperities, and substitute a rational conviction of the benefits of our Government: that it may unite the people and their rulers in sympathy, and that the differences that separate them may be gradually lessened and ultimately annihilated. Whatever, however, be the will of Almighty Providence respecting the future Government of India, it is clearly our duty as long as the charge be confided to our hands, to execute the trust to the best of our ability for the good of the people.' And who is there, who is capable of reading history aright, who shall deny that such a high ideal has ever inspired the rulers of India? A question that has often occurred to the writer of this sketch is how it has come about that men, who, from his own observation,

were themselves distinguished, during their Indian service, for high ideals and devotion to duty, can, on their return to England, fail to give their countrymen, who are still serving in India, and under far harder conditions than they themselves were ever called upon to serve, credit for similar qualities ; and why a member of the Indian Civil Service, who has returned to England, should be styled 'A high-minded Englishman', while one who is still serving his country in India should be dubbed 'An unsympathetic bureaucrat'? The answer will not be found in prejudice alone nor in disappointed ambition alone : it may possibly be found in an Orientation of the reason and imagination. On resigning his high office into the hands of Lord Auckland, in the spring of 1836, Sir Charles Metcalfe was created a Grand Commander of the Bath : and for a second time he received the reversion of the Governor-Generalship.

He had now spent thirty-six years in India without having left the country for a single day, and his thoughts began, not unnaturally to turn to retirement from the public service. But he could not yet be spared : and Lord Auckland expressed his wish that he should return and take up his old post at Agra. The original idea of making Agra into a Presidency with a Governor as its ruler had been given up, and it had been converted into a Lieutenant-Governorship. Metcalfe resumed his work with all his old enthusiasm : but he did not remain long in the Province. In 1838, he finally resolved to sever his connexion with India. One of the moving causes of his intention to resign, has been said to have been a report that had reached him from private sources that some of the Directors of the Company had passed strictures on his measure for the emancipation of the Press. Certain correspondence had passed between himself and the Directors on the subject. And it is said that he was not over pleased with the reply he received. He seems to have been one of those public men, and they are not a few, who, possessing 'the mind conscious to itself of rectitude', are extremely sensitive on the score of their official reputation, and regard what less sensitive men treat only as legitimate criticism from their superiors in office that

comes all in a day's work, as a stain on their escutcheon. The historian, in recording the incident, has thus written : ' The one flaw in an otherwise perfect character was over-sensitiveness ; and a wise man has remarked " the longer I live, the more convinced I am that over-sensitiveness is a fault in a public man ". In Metcalfe's case this over-sensitiveness may have been an infirmity, but it was the infirmity of a noble mind, and it detracts nothing from the general admiration to which he is entitled. It arose out of what one, who knew him well, described as his very quick and delicate and noble sense of public character.' And the historian significantly adds :—' The very fact of a public servant in India feeling sensitive on the score of his official reputation, and eager to repel all assaults upon it, was becoming a new thing in Indian official life, and marks better than anything else the great frontier line between the old and the new race of public servants in India.' And from that time to the present day this honourable feeling has continued to be the distinguishing mark of all holding high office in India : and the Indian Services, Civil and Military, have come to be recognized by all as ' the highest-minded services in the world '.

When the time came for Metcalfe to leave India for good, all the different communities in Calcutta vied with each other in manifesting their esteem and admiration of a great public servant. Few men have left India better beloved than he was, and this was largely due to his having chosen, says the historian, 'the Christian precept "Do as you would be done by ", as the motto not only of his private, but also of his public life.' He was now fifty-three, and after his thirty-eight years of unbroken service, he did not anticipate further re-employment by the State. But his country still had need of him. He had made his mark in England's greatest dependency in the Old World : he was yet to make it in her greatest Colony in the New World. The after-career of the great administrators of India, when once they have passed from the scene, does not, as a rule, fall within the scope of these sketches, but the case of Sir Charles Metcalfe is an exceptional one, and no picture of him would be complete without some account of that after-career. He is reported once

to have said: 'I have risen in the East, and must set in the West': and it is that setting that has to be dealt with in the concluding portion of this sketch, but it can only be so dealt with briefly.

Metcalfe had been contemplating a Parliamentary career, but when the offer came to him of the Governorship of Jamaica, he at once accepted it. On hearing of his appointment, his old chief, the Marquis Wellesley, congratulated him in these memorable words:—'It is a matter of cordial joy and affectionate pride to me to witness the elevation of a personage whose great talents and virtues have been cultivated under my anxious care and directed by my hand to the public service in India. No appointment has ever received an equal share of applause. You were once pleased to tell me that you were educated in my school, and that it was the school of virtue, integrity, and honour. That school has produced much good fruit for the service of India.' Metcalfe's task in Jamaica was no light one, it was a period of transition: there was still a great gulf between the different classes of the community: on the one side were the negroes who had only recently been emancipated from slavery, on the other the Europeans, who had but recently been the masters and owners of these slaves. Though he was not entirely successful in reconciling all classes to his policy, he did succeed in narrowing this gulf, and in reconciling to a very large extent the Colony to the Mother-country. The principles on which he acted have been given in his own words: 'On my taking charge of the Government, the course which I laid down for myself was to conciliate all parties, and by the aid of all parties to promote the happiness and welfare of Jamaica:' and it would have been strange, indeed, if a man with his past record, 'who,' as the historian has written, 'loved all men, all races, and all classes,' had not been able to achieve a very fair measure of success in his efforts in that direction.

He returned to England in 1842. It was at this period of his career that he had to undergo an operation for cancer in the cheek, a disease that had first manifested itself as far back as 1837. The operation gave him temporary relief; and he was again settling down to a life

of retired leisure, when his next call came to serve his country: this time in the shape of an offer of the important post of Governor-General of Canada. His sense of duty to his country again led him to accept the appointment.

The high office that he had now undertaken was to tax all his powers. He was destined to be in continual conflict with one party or another that tried to get all power into their own hands. He did not consider it consonant with his duty to his sovereign that her representative should be regarded as a nonentity in the Government: but his characteristic qualities, and especially his marvellous patience, never deserted him. A political writer of the day thus described one scene at which he was himself present. 'I never witnessed such patience under provocation. I am speaking now of what I saw myself and could not have believed without seeing. It was not merely quiet endurance, but a constant good-humoured cheerfulness and lightness of heart in the midst of trouble enough to provoke a saint or make a strong man ill. To those, who, like me, have seen three Governors of Canada literally worried to death, this was a glorious spectacle.' This display of patience was all the more wonderful, as all this time Metcalfe was suffering intensely from his deadly malady: he had already lost one eye, and his work had to be done in a darkened room; and whenever he drove abroad he had to be carefully protected from all dust and glare. An eminent surgeon had been sent out by the Queen's Government to see what he could do, but he had found he could do nothing, and had returned to England. Metcalfe had recently been created a peer of the realm, and he was now Lord Metcalfe: this had been some consolation to him in his sufferings: he still held on to the post of duty with undiminished courage and resolution: and only when he felt his sufferings were impairing his efficiency, did he suggest to the English Ministry that he should be allowed to retire: he left the final decision, however, with his own ministers in Canada, whom he called together to discuss the matter with them at his country-house. The historian has thus recorded the incident: 'It was a scene never to be forgotten by any who were present on this memorable occasion in the

Governor-General's sheltered room. Some were dissolved in tears; all were agitated by a strong emotion of sorrow and sympathy, mingled with a sort of wondering admiration of the heroic constancy of their chief. He told them that if they desired his continuance at the head of the Government, he would willingly abide by their decision: but that the Queen had graciously signified her willingness that he should be relieved and that he doubted much whether the adequate performance of his duties had not almost ceased to be a physical possibility. It need not be said what was their decision. They besought him to depart, and he consented. A nobler spectacle than that of this agonized man resolutely offering to die at his post, the world has seen only once before.' The present generation has had an example of similar fortitude and devotion to duty under almost similar circumstances. The late Sir Denzil Ibbetson, when Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, had been recommended to proceed to England to undergo an operation for a similar malady at a time when there was every prospect of such an operation proving successful. A crisis suddenly occurred in the country, and he refused to leave his post till it was over. The malady had by this time obtained a grip, and the possibility of a successful operation became exceedingly doubtful. He proceeded to England, and prudence would have counselled his remaining there. He returned to India with the sentence of death upon him. The circumstances under which he decided to return have been thus recorded in *The Times*: ' There had been base insinuations against him of timidity in the least reputable section of the vernacular Press, when illness compelled him to come home, and it is quite possible that his resignation before the expiry of his leave would have been wilfully misrepresented as an indication that he had lost the confidence of his official chiefs. So he returned to Lahore, and in spite of grave physical infirmity laboured for a few months longer with fortitude and zeal, making the impress of his strong personality felt on all branches of the administration. From the same sense of duty, he resigned his charge when no longer able to fulfil its obligations efficiently; and he came home to certain early death, calm and courageous

to the last.' It was a noble end to a noble career, and the writer of this sketch may congratulate himself that he served for a time under such a man, and is himself one of those who have felt the impress of his strong, and at the same time kindly, personality.

Lord Metcalfe returned to England only to die, and within a few months after leaving Canada, he passed away peacefully. His biographer relates that 'the last sounds which reached him were the sweet strains of his sister's harp, and his last words were "How sweet those sounds are". Forty-five of the sixty-one years of his life had been spent in strenous public service "in foreign lands and under hostile skies", and during the whole of that time he had scarely known either home or rest.'

To Lord Macaulay was entrusted the task of composing an inscription on a tablet that was erected to his memory, by his friends, in his old parish church : it is an inscription worthy of the man whose merits it immortalizes, and of the man who composed its noble language.

Near this stone is laid
Charles Theophilus, First and Last Lord Metcalfe,
a Statesman tried in many high posts, and different conjunctures,
and found equal to all.
The three greatest Dependencies of the British Crown
were successively entrusted to his care.
In India his fortitude, his wisdom, his probity and his moderation
are held in honourable remembrance
by men of many races, languages, and religions.
In Jamaica, still convulsed by a social revolution,
he calmed the evil passions
which long suffering had engendered in one class,
and long domination in another.
In Canada, not yet recovered from the calamities of civil war,
he reconciled contending factions
to each other and to the Mother Country.
Public esteem was the just reward of his public virtue,
but those only who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship

could appreciate the whole worth of his gentle and
noble nature.
Costly monuments in Asiatic and American cities
attest the gratitude of Nations which he ruled ;
this tablet records the sorrow and the pride
with which his memory is cherished by private affection.
He was born the 30th day of January, 1785.
He died the 5th day of September, 1846.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT OF NORTH-WESTERN INDIA

### JAMES THOMASON, 1804–1853.

MR. JAMES THOMASON has been described as one of the most successful Englishmen that have ever borne sway in India, and as a statesman of the highest rank in civil administration: a short sketch of his career, the key-note to which was practical utility, should therefore be an interesting study.

In order to form some idea of the evolution of a man's mental and moral qualities, it is necessary to know something of his ancestry, and of the influences brought to bear upon him during his early youth.

His father was the Reverend Thomas Thomason, who was an intimate friend of Charles Simeon, a man whose influence on the religious life of his time has been described as unique. Thomas Thomason was a chaplain in India for several years, and had won a considerable reputation there as a classical scholar: he had studied Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, and had utilized his knowledge of these languages in making translations of the Scriptures. He had also interested himself in the matter of the provision of a system of national education both higher and primary, and had received a commission from the Marquis of Hastings, whom he had accompanied on one of his tours in Northern India, to prepare a general scheme. His suggestions were not carried into practice at the time, but they eventually bore fruit. 'One man sows and another man reaps.' So it was with Thomas Thomason: he had been the pioneer in the field of elementary education, and his son James was destined to carry on his work to fruition. Altogether James Thomason's father seems to have been an exceptional man, and Sir Richard Temple has said of him: 'Take him for all in all he was one of

the best clergymen that the Church of England produced during the early part of the nineteenth century: he was a power for good in the strange land where he pitched his tent, and a beacon for his generation in India.' And of his mother the same authority has recorded: 'She displayed a model of Christian womanhood before the women of India: there was not a work of benevolence within her reach, but that she engaged in it, as if it had been a domestic duty.'

James Thomason accompanied his father to India at the early age of four, his experiences on the voyage must have been unpleasant enough, for the ship they were travelling by was wrecked in the Bay of Bengal. At the age of ten he was sent back to England and placed in charge of his father's friend, who was also the boy's godfather, Charles Simeon. His words to the boy on first receiving him into his care, mark the deep sense of responsibility with which he undertook the office. 'I hope to be your loving father in man's stead, your anxious father in God's stead.' Charles Simeon was a man in every way fitted to have charge of youth, he has been described as the greatest educator of that time, and as a man thoroughly imbued with the awful importance of earnest and sincere religion.

Among James Thomason's schoolfellows at his first school were two boys who were destined to become famous in after life each in his own sphere, Macaulay, the lawyer-historian, and Wilberforce, the emancipator of slaves. On leaving school, he went through the two years' course prescribed for writers in the Company's service at Haileybury College, and then rejoined his parents in India at the age of eighteen, as a writer.

On his first arrival in India, Thomason carried on his studies at the College of Fort William, devoting himself especially, like his father, to the study of Oriental languages. He joined the judicial branch of the Company's service to begin with, but at an early period of his career was compelled to take sick leave to England. On his return to India he married, and was appointed registrar of what was then called the Sadr Adalat Court. His early proficiency in Muhammadan law received the encomium

of his examiners, who reported that he showed intense application and extraordinary talent. That this encomium was no exaggeration is proved by the fact that he was able to read before the Native law officers a passage from the Hidaya, or Sacred Law, in Arabic, and to explain its meaning to them in Persian. He extended his study into the realm of Hindu law which necessitated his acquiring a knowledge of Sanskrit. It is no wonder that proficiency such as this in two such different languages as Arabic and Sanskrit has been described as being almost unique in Anglo-Indian records. Herein may be traced one factor, and that by no means the least important, in the influence he was destined to acquire over the people of the country he had adopted as his own. Soon after his appointment as judge he was again obliged to take sick leave as the district he was posted to, which was known as the Jungle Mahals, was an extremely unhealthy one, and his health had suffered in consequence. On his return from leave he was appointed secretary to Government.

It was at this time that he came to the momentous decision to take up the executive branch of administration, in place of secretariat work. When he left the secretariat he received the thanks of the Government, publicly communicated to him by Sir Charles Metcalfe. This momentous decision of his was all part of his desire to make himself a thoroughly efficient officer of Government. Sir William Muir has given expression to some of the disadvantages of purely secretariat work to an officer who desires to obtain a thorough insight into all the intricate problems of Indian administration. 'It is not in the secretarial bureau alone, or in the private study that administrative capacity is to be gained: the views of enlightened officers may thus be thoroughly mastered, and valuable notes and memoranda may be multiplied. But no study will supply the place of personal experience, and so long as an officer has not himself mixed with the people, and come into immediate contact with them, as their district officer, his opinions cannot, properly speaking, be called his own, since they are grounded, not upon personal observation, but upon the reports of others.'

Thomason's first appointment to the executive branch

was that of collector and magistrate of a district in the Upper Provinces known as Azamgarh. The journey thither in those days was not the simple thing it is now, in these days of good roads and railways: the distance was 500 miles, and travellers had to go by boat, or steamer, and by palki. Looking back in later life on his work in this district, Thomason wrote thus to his children: 'It was to me a field of victory where such repute and status as I had won was founded'; at the same time, in characteristically modest words he added 'how far short have I fallen in the fulfilment of God's will!'. During this period of service as district officer, Thomason had to combine the task of administration with that of survey and settlement work, which, however unusual a combination in these days, was not so in the early days of British administration in India. It had the one great advantage of bringing a district officer into very intimate relations with his people. Thomason rode or walked all over his district, generally spending the better part of the year in tents. He was thus able to see the people not only as they appear in public offices and courts of justice, but also as they are in their villages, and in their humble callings at home. When he was at the head quarters he was usually busy devising material improvements for his people's welfare, indeed, the only recreation he allowed himself was an occasional inspection of the city or the station.

His work in the settlement branch further gave him an opportunity of which he availed himself to the full, of inquiring into the past history of the tribes and families of the district, he thus laid the foundation of that profound knowledge of the diverse and intricate land tenures of the district for which he afterwards received the encomium of the Court of Directors in London. Throughout his settlement work, he ever kept in view the proprietary rights inherent in the sons of the soil. He seems to have lived a very happy domestic life during his stay in Azamgarh, and he retained a life-long affection for the place: in one of his letters, he thus wrote: 'Seven years of uninterrupted happiness are a blessing denied to many.' One of his favourite recreations was writing up in a manuscript book

passages from his favourite authors, especially religious authors, and carefully indexing them for purposes of family study: he kept this practice up indeed to the last: he regarded it not only as a valuable means of keeping in touch with his family, when they were absent from him, but also as a means of self-discipline, as he himself expressed it at a later period of his life: 'The best discipline for myself is the duty of instructing my children.' The extent of his reading may be gauged by the fact that the extracts were taken from over one hundred authors.

For the next four years after leaving Azamgarh, he held the appointment of secretary to the Agra Government. Soon after joining his appointment he was compelled to accompany his wife, who had fallen seriously ill, to the Cape: that was the limit of leave he could himself obtain from the Company; his wife having become worse, he was compelled to take her on to England: he knew that in so doing he ran the risk of forfeiting his appointment: however, he was able to obtain the necessary extension of leave, but was ordered to return to India at once: he did so, but only to receive the sad news, as he landed at Bombay, of his wife's death. The journey from Bombay to Allahabad, a distance of 600 miles, was a long and tedious one: travelling in a palki, thirty miles was the utmost that could be accomplished in the day. From Allahabad he proceeded to Agra to take up his appointment again.

He soon after became a member of the Board of Revenue, and was then appointed to a post that has always been regarded as 'The blue ribbon of the Indian Service', that of foreign secretary under the Government of India. In Thomason's case it proved to be a stepping-stone to a still higher appointment, in 1843 he became the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. He was only thirty-nine at the time, but he had already twenty-one years' service to his credit. The words he uttered on hearing of his appointment were characteristic: 'I may meet with detraction and shall have to overcome prejudices, but the God who has placed me there will enable me to do my duty, or, if He shall see fit to discredit me, or remove me from the sphere, He can also give me sub-

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mission to His Will.' Though his appointment might have been criticized by some of the older men, he was personally and socially most cordially received by all. He held office down to the day of his death in 1853.

The Province he was thus called on to rule comprised Delhi and the Nerbudda territories, both of which were separated off at a later period : it did not comprise Oudh, which is now an integral portion of it, for Oudh was still an independent Native State. It had only been formed into a separate Government in 1835, under Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was its first ruler : he had his capital at Agra, and this place remained the capital till 1858, when Allahabad took its place. The Province as now constituted is styled the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

The Government of India has been sometimes charged with being too bureaucratic and unsympathetic : this charge may be true if only the outward form is taken into consideration : in its inner working, however, as exhibited by the high officers on whom the responsibility of administration mainly falls, it is essentially democratic and sympathetic. It is almost an unnecessary truism to say that the ruling class of Englishmen have always shown their sympathy with the masses of the people of India. There may have been greater opportunities in the past for showing this sympathy in an active form than there are in the present with the great demands upon the time and the thoughts of the responsible officers made by secretariats : but, given the opportunity, Englishmen have never been lacking in its practical manifestation. Some may have shown it in one way, some in another : it is all a matter of individual idiosyncrasy. Not all men are gifted with the geniality of manner, and the command of colloquial vernacular possessed by Sir Thomas Munro, of Madras fame, and indeed, as Lord Dalhousie once said, of world-wide fame. Association with the people in tent life, and practical help in all times of distress and calamity of famine and pestilence, are methods common to all alike. James Thomason had his own special system ; there may have been no outward voicing of his sympathy, as indeed there very rarely is with Englishmen, but it was there at all times, held in reserve possibly, but manifested in every

action of his administration, by ceaseless and philanthropic efforts for the general welfare, and a zeal for good works which has been described as ' a slow fire burning unceasingly and inextinguishably '. His manner was the same to the people of the country as it was to his own countrymen, undemonstrative and reserved. A leading principle with him was by ' putting his own shoulder to the wheel, and his own hand to the plough ', to leave his people better far than he found them in wealth and circumstances, in wisdom and understanding.

Thomason's first care on taking charge of his high office was the education of his agents in probity and in integrity; he gave a steady impetus to the training of his Indian subordinates, and effected many improvements in their status, emoluments, and promotion. He also paid special attention to the training of the European magistrates and collectors; he knew that it was through the district officers that the Indians would also be best trained. Thus he issued a series of manuals which contained directions to collectors and to settlement officers. These put forth the whole duty of officers on the broadest principles and in the minutest details, inculcating also those maxims that lay nearest his own heart, the necessity, for instance, of considerateness and kindliness towards the people of the country, the guardianship of their interests, and the vindication of their rights. These manuals were intended rather for guidance than as treatises to be blindly followed: as he himself said, ' I like better to address myself to the reason of my fellow servants, than simply to their sense of obedience.' In other words, he wanted a body of trained colleagues rather than a body of blindly obedient subordinates.

There were many men who served under Thomason who owed much to his system of training, to mention only the names of such men as John Lawrence, Robert Montgomery, William Muir, and John Strachey. There were many others also, all of whom became distinguished in their after careers as men of action and men of thought. Lord Dalhousie showed what he thought of Thomason's system of training by taking away some of his best men, when he was arranging for the administration of the new Province

of the Punjab, and required some of the best men he could find for the purpose. What Thomason himself thought of his own loss may be gathered from his own words: 'It has been a heavy tax: nineteen men of the best blood: I feel very weak after so much depletion: but the remaining blood will circulate more quickly and healthily, so we shall soon get over it.'

Touring in tents had ever been a favourite method with Thomason of seeing things with his own eyes, and he kept up his old habit in his new Province, making each year a prolonged tour. The area of the Province was over 24,000 square miles, a fact which is sufficient to show what these tours entailed in the way of physical fatigue alone. His tours were all very carefully mapped out some months beforehand, and he used to arrive at his halting-places with a punctuality that has been described as amazing. It was his invariable custom to halt on Sundays, and, in the absence of a clergyman, he would himself read the services of the Church. He availed himself to the full of the abundant opportunities thus afforded him of promoting the welfare of his people. and of gaining that knowledge, so essential to a ruler of men, of the character and qualities of his officers of all grades. As an illustration of the care he devoted to finding the right man to put into the right place, he once wrote to a friend that he had six good appointments vacant, and six officers wanting appointments, but unluckily the men did not suit the place. The length of time over which his period of office extended gave him perhaps special facilities for making himself acquainted with the wants of his Province, greater, it may be, than those enjoyed by more modern administrators, whose period of office rarely exceeds five years.

Chief among the problems awaiting his attention was the completion of the settlement operations; these had been commenced by Mr. Bird, a former member of the Revenue Board. Considering the immense area over which the operations extended, the task was no light one, but the man who had been called on to inaugurate the new settlement was no ordinary man; he has been thus described: 'Bird was a born leader of men, and in his day there was

no civil officer in Northern India equal to him in reputation; he was a man of no common order; a mind capable of dealing equally with minute details and general principles; stores of information collected by unusual powers of memory and observation, cheerful spirits and unfailing health, together with a robust energy, the "vigor animi ingentibus par". He was Thomason's forerunner, the pioneer, the originator, inventor, whose work Thomason took up, carried on to its conclusion, and rendered fully effective.' Mr. Bird's farewell words to India after his thirty-three years of service had been: 'I am now about to quit the service, and my only desire is that the good which has been effected may be maintained.' In Thomason's hands that work was to be more than well maintained, as might have been expected from a man who has been described as the most accomplished administrator of land revenue ever seen in India. How it was not only maintained, but carried on to a successful issue, has been shown by his biographer, who has thus recorded his work: 'He was among the foremost of those who systematized, cherished, secured, and rendered effective the property of the people in the land of Northern India.' The underlying idea of Mr. Bird's settlement had been the simultaneous registration of titles and record of rights, and this was the end in view in Thomason's land revenue policy.

The subject of land revenue was one to which he had always paid the greatest attention: it was indeed a matter of the greatest importance in a Province where the land tax touched vitally the welfare of every individual in a vast body of peasant proprietors, who occupied by far the greater part of the country. The establishment of property in land and the recognition of the proprietary rights of the people in their holdings was always a cardinal feature in his land revenue policy. He did not aim at any revolution in the disposition of property, but at determining what the existing rights were, and at upholding them. He saw clearly, moreover, that the value of all property in land must depend upon the determination of the land tax; if the demand were temperately and equitably regulated then the property would be a living thing of actual and enjoyable value. He considered it therefore

to be the first duty of the ruling power to search out this property everywhere for the sake of the people, to bring it into full operation, and then to hedge it round with reasonable security. To him the main value of a settlement rested on the following considerations: 'Whoever may be in theory the proprietor of land in India, the absence of all actual restriction on the supreme power in the determination of the amount of its demand left all property in land virtually dependent on its will. An estate assessed above its productive power is worthless, and must cease to produce anything to the proprietor, unless the demand is relaxed. So long as the worth of the land is left from year to year dependent on the pleasure of the Government, its value must be uncertain, and cannot be great. But when the Government limits its demand to a reasonable amount, and fixes that amount for a term of years, a marketable property is thereby created, and it becomes of much importance that the person be named in whose favour this property is recognized or created.'

Such being the leading principles of Thomason's land revenue policy, it may be interesting to see what was the tenor of the instructions he issued to settlement officers and collectors, which have already been referred to. The two leading points that he called the attention of settlement officers to were the question of proprietary right, and that of tenant-right. He considered that the most valuable test of the former was the *vox populi*, the recognition by the people generally of those who claimed to be proprietors. But in cases where no proprietary right could be found to exist, or to have been exercised at any time, then the decision was to rest with the Government. The securing of tenant right was always one of the cardinal features of his policy, and he held that the status of all tenants cultivating under either peasant-proprietors, or under village communities, or under large landowners, should be treated as property of a kind, though of an inferior degree. The main point that he called the attention of collectors to was, granting the recognition of a proprietary right in the land, how effect could best be given to property in land. He foresaw that, as people began to

realize the value of the proprietary right, disputes would naturally arise; he therefore directed that, as far as possible, the adjustment should be made on the spot by the executive officer while preparing the record of rights; this, he thought, would save recourse to the Civil Courts.

A beautiful picture of such an informal tribunal has been given; it is from the pen of Mr. Thomason's secretary: 'We saw the white camp rising in the long aisles of the ancient mango groves; as the day advances the wide-spread shade begins to be peopled with living figures. Group after group of villagers arrive in their best and whitest dresses, and a hum of voices succeeds to the stillness. The carpet is then spread in the open air; the chair is set; litigants and spectators take their seats on the ground in orderly ranks; silence is proclaimed, and the rural court is opened; as case after case is brought forward, the very demeanour of the parties, and of the crowds around, seem to point out on which side justice lies. All are free to come and go with little trouble and expense. No need of lengthened pleadings. A few simple questions bring out the matter of the suit, and the grounds on which it rests. Scores of witnesses are ready on the spot, alike unsummoned and untutored. No need of the Koran or Ganges water. The love of truth is strong even in an Indian breast, when preserved from counteracting influences, still more so then when the sanction of public opinion assists and protects the rightful cause. In such a court Abraham sat, when arbitrating among his simple-minded herdsmen. In such a court was justice everywhere administered in the childhood of the human race.'

Village communities formed an important feature of the territories Thomason was called upon to rule. Sir Charles Metcalfe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, expressed his opinion of their value in the following terms: 'The union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered. It is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.' Thomason held the same

opinion about them, and did all he could to preserve and foster them. For purposes of settlement he held them to be bodies of proprietors holding their estates in partnership, their estates being the villages; partnership constituted their special characteristic; their consequent responsibility was that of a joint responsibility, the Government demand was upon the whole community, and the liability was in common. He considered that this joint responsibility was of special value in preventing the land of any among the brethren being sold for default in payment of the land revenue.

Thomason improved the status of the hereditary native officials, such as the village accountant and the district notary, or, as they are styled in Indian parlance, the Patwari and the Kanungo: he gave them special and defined duties to discharge. Thus it was the duty of the Patwari to prepare the records of land revenue, and that of the Kanungo to act as their custodian.

Perhaps the most difficult task that Thomason was called on to undertake was in connexion with the large landholders, the Taluqdars. In their original status the Taluqdars had been simply contractors for the collection of revenue from the mass of the peasant proprietors. The system had been gradually abused just as it had been in Bengal: the peasant-proprietors had been gradually elbowed out of their proprietary rights. The Taluqdars had thus become superior proprietors, and the land tax in their hands had become rent which they collected as due to themselves, paying the Government demand out of it and retaining the remainder in their hands. The original proprietors had thus become either inferior proprietors, or simply tenants with occupancy rights. The decision that Thomason came to was that existing facts should be recognized where the Taluqdars had securely established themselves as landlords; but, where doubt existed, the original proprietors were to be supported, and in such a case the settlement was to be made with them: the original proprietors were to pay the land tax direct to Government, while the Taluqdars concerned were to be allowed a certain percentage of the land revenue in lieu of the profits they formerly got from the assignments of the revenue after the defrayal of all their charges. This decision

cost him a considerable amount of anxiety, for, while the Taluqdars could not complain of their financial interests having suffered, they had felt that their social status had been weakened. Thomason fully recognized the value of a territorial aristocracy as a social force, and saw the danger that might arise from any lowering of the status of the great land-holders, but he also had to consider the interests of all classes, and no one could accuse him of being the champion of one class as against another; his only anxiety was that justice should be done, and the verdict of history has been that justice was done.

Another question closely connected with the land was that of irrigation. Thomason had a natural bent for civil engineering, and this was a question therefore that was likely specially to appeal to him; besides, the question had been one of pressing importance to the Province ever since the great famine of 1836. He had noted, in the course of his tours, the faulty alignment of many of the old canals that had been constructed by native Governments in the past; while utilizing much of the old work, he planned new works on more favourable lines. His chief care was the great Ganges Canal: the financial difficulties to the construction of this canal which had arisen under the Government of Lord Ellenborough had been removed by Lord Hardinge, after the conclusion of the first Sikh War. Sir Proby Cautley was the engineer officer entrusted with this great work, which has been of enormous benefit to the great tract of country which lies between the rivers Jumna and Ganges, and which has, in consequence, received the name of The Doab, or ' The Two Waters ', the Mesopotamia of India.

Still further to encourage the acquisition by the people of India of the science of engineering, Mr. Thomason founded the Civil Engineering College at Rurki. This was the first step taken towards providing technical education in Northern India. The primary object of the college was to create a supply of engineer subordinates in the Irrigation Department. Subsequently the scope was enlarged to admit non-commissioned officers, and other candidates from the European community for employment under the Public Works Department. It was part of Mr. Thomason's original

scheme that the Engineering College should work in connexion with village schools, aiding and stimulating their work, and preparing boys for ultimate admission within its own walls.

In the realm of education generally, Mr. Thomason held the opinion that the provision of higher education should be left mainly to private enterprise, Government assistance being confined to grants in aid. The provision of elementary education for the masses of the people was, he considered, the great and pressing necessity, and the primary duty of the State; it was a matter for the active agency of the Government. The task of providing for the elementary education of the population of a Province containing some 40,000 villages, and some four million peasant proprietors, was a gigantic one, and hitherto no attempt had been made to grapple with it. In the face of obstacles that would have staggered most men, Mr. Thomason managed to achieve a very fair measure of success. His efforts, moreover, had the effect of giving an impetus to public instruction throughout the whole of British India, but he did not live long enough to see the full fruits of his pioneer labours. The famous dispatch of Sir Charles Wood, which forms a silent testimony to those labours, appeared only a year after his death. His scheme provided for the inspection by Government inspectors of all existing indigenous schools, and for the provision of scholarships to enable the most deserving boys to carry on their education beyond the primary stage, if they so wished. The Government was to maintain several schools in the interior of every district, which might serve as models; as it was an absolute impossibility for the Government to establish schools for each of the 40,000 villages, one school for each group of neighbouring villages was to be established, and instruction was thus to be brought more or less within reach of each village. He hoped much from the co-operation of the people themselves. 'The object of this scheme,' he wrote, 'is to stimulate the people to exertions on their own part to remove ignorance. One means of effecting that object may be sought in that feature of the Revenue system which provides for annual registration of landed property: this scheme contemplates drawing forth the energies of the people for their own improvement, rather

than actually supplying to them the means of instruction at the cost of Government: persuasion, assistance, and encouragement are the means to be principally supplied.' The same idea is expressed in a private letter that he wrote to a friend: 'I want to do something in a manner consonant with Native institutions and ideas, and also to induce the people to work with me and exert themselves in the cause.' But he hoped most from the working of the new settlement, already referred to, in providing incentives to education amongst the rural communities. He had written thus on this subject: 'The Revenue system, when rightly understood and properly worked, affords the greatest stimulus to the general education of the people. Indeed, it cannot be expected that the registration of rights will ever become perfect till the people are sufficiently educated to understand it and to watch over its execution.'

Local and provincial works everywhere throughout his Province also received Mr. Thomason's closest attention. Indeed, all his thoughts at all times were set on promoting in every possible way the welfare of the people committed to his charge. His biographer has thus said of him: 'All district officers regard themselves as the patriarchs of their districts, and as stewards for the improvement of their national estates, but never before had this idea been so firmly grasped by any civil governor as by Thomason, and by none so fully carried into effect.' Among the works of public utility that received his care and attention was the improvement of the means of communication and of commerce; in his days railways did not exist in his Province; roads were therefore the chief arteries of communication; among the roads that received his special attention was the Grand Trunk Road that led from Calcutta to the North-West Frontiers: he had this thoroughly well metalled on the system which had but recently been introduced into England by Mr. McAdam, and which had been named after him.

In the department of public health, a department which in these days is largely left to local bodies, his success in combating certain outbreaks of small-pox and plague among the mountaineers inhabiting the mountain regions of a district called Kumaon was so great, that in later years it

was said that if there was any failure in the arrangements for dealing with similar outbreaks, the people of that region actually resented it.

His system of dealing with any particularly barbarous district may be illustrated from his own account of what was achieved in Merwara in the way of improvement in the character of the people : 'We first thrashed them soundly, then raised a battalion amongst them to afford employment, and then by a conciliatory, just, and moderate rule, secured their confidence.' The aboriginal races of India are proverbially shy and suspicious, and at the same time proud : this has always rendered it exceedingly difficult to deal with them. During the recent famines that have occurred in Central India, one of the greatest problems that officers engaged in the humane task of relief were confronted with was to get some of these tribes to accept the relief offered them, and even to get into touch with them at all. To have thus won their confidence, therefore, shows the measure of success attained by Thomason.

One of the last public functions that Mr. Thomason took part in was the opening of Queen's College, at Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus. The speech he made on the occasion was a notable one. Queen's College stands conspicuous among the public buildings of the Province for the beauty of its architecture, and the picturesque nature of its surroundings. Mr. Thomason commenced his speech with the reasons that had actuated himself and his colleagues in having it so : 'We feel,' he said, 'the necessity of affording to the ordinary course of daily tuition every assistance that can be derived to it from extraneous circumstances. Amongst these is the natural effect upon the mind of architectural beauty. Those who recollect the influence exercised on the minds of persons in our own country by the buildings in which our schools and colleges were placed, will not be disposed to underrate this effect.' He next spoke of the opportunities the new college would afford of supplementing the teaching of Hindu Philosophy in Sanskrit by the correct conclusions of European Philosophy. But perhaps the most noticeable portion of his speech was his noble apologia for the civil administration of the Government of India, which runs thus : 'We have not swept over the country

like a torrent, destroying all that is found, and leaving nothing but what itself deposited. Our course has been rather that of a gently swelling inundation, which leaves the former surface undisturbed and spreads over it a richer mould from which the vegetation may derive a new verdure, and the landscape possess a beauty which was unknown before. Such has been our course in the civil administration. We examined the existing systems, retained whatever of them we found right and just, and then engrafted on this basis new maxims derived from our own institutions. And thus we have succeeded in forming a system which is generally admitted to have been easy in its operation, and happy in its effect.' The conclusion of this great speech was characterized by that broad-minded religious toleration which was one of his most distinguishing traits; it marked his recognition of the fact that differences of opinion must prevail in the sphere of religion; he urged upon his audience that each should offer, in his own way, a prayer to the God each worshipped, that morality might be rightly taught, and truth in all its majesty prevail, within the walls of the new college.

Mr. Morley, commenting some years ago on a remarkable utterance of Mr. Gladstone in favour of toleration towards other faiths of the world, used this noble language: 'Tolerance means reverence for all the possibilities of truth. It means acknowledgement that she dwells in divers mansions, and wears vestures of many colours, and speaks in strange tongues. It means the charity that is ever greater than faith or hope.' Mr. Thomason's attitude towards the faiths of the people of the East was, indeed, always marked by the same broad sympathy and tolerance; while himself a profound believer in the truth of his own religion, he would never allow himself to go beyond the rules of neutrality in religion, which he saw was the only possible position for the Government of India to adopt. It is reported of him that, when some friends of his asked him to allow Christian teaching to accompany secular teaching in his new scheme for primary education, his reply was: 'My business as a Governor is to enlighten people, not to teach religion.'

Towards the middle of September, in the year 1853,

Thomason was nominated by the India Board to the post of Governor of the Madras Presidency, but on the very day on which the Queen signed the paper giving her sanction to his appointment, September 27, 1853, he passed peacefully away, dying at the post of duty.

The notification of the Government of India issued after the announcement of his death contained this high encomium: 'Conspicuous ability, devotion to the public service, and a conscientious discharge of every duty, have marked each step of his honourable course; while his surpassing administrative capacity, his extensive knowledge of affairs, his clear judgement, his benevolence of character, and suavity of demeanour, have adorned and exalted the high position which he was wisely selected to fill.'

Similarly, the Court of Directors recorded their high opinion of him: 'Mr. Thomason had obtained distinction in the several stages of his official progress; and, as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces during a period of nine years, he exhibited all the qualities of an accomplished and successful administrator. He omitted no research, and spared no pains, to make himself master of every subject that came before him, however minute, or however comprehensive.

The eulogy of the Press perhaps gives the chief clue to his success as an administrator: 'It is not in a barren record of incidents that the biography of such a man as Mr. Thomason consists. It is rather in a minute detail of the process by which he contrived to brace up the administration, till it became the model Government of Asia, and while rendering it strong to the point of despotism, retained the affection of the people who obeyed it. In all his projects he never forgot that the success of a centralized Government depends upon smaller arrangements. He would walk into the record room of a collectorate, take down a bundle of vernacular proceedings, detect at a glance if they had been properly arranged, and remark upon the orders passed by the collector. He would enter a medical dispensary, examine the book of cases, gladden the heart of the Indian surgeon by a few pertinent remarks, and perhaps set him thinking on the properties of a drug procurable in the bazaar, and relied upon by Indian practitioners, but un-

known to the English physician. He would question an Indian revenue officer about the condition of his villages, and remark upon the effect of a hailstorm which had lately occurred in some village under his control. Every officer was aware that with him generalities were of no avail, that the Governor knew more of his district than he did himself, and that his own best policy was to point out deficiencies.'

In some correspondence that passed between Mr. Thomason and one of his daughters occur these words: 'What was wanted to make India really loyal was a personal embodiment of the ruling power rather than an abstract idea. Loyalty in any form is delightful. I am sure it is the safeguard of the country. We expect the people of India to be attached to the Government, that is, the East India Company. But the thing is impossible. No Oriental people ever yet loved an abstract idea. They must have a personal embodiment of the ruling power: it is that that acts with extraordinary force on the minds of our fellow subjects.' In these words lies another if not indeed the chief clue to his success, he made himself the personal embodiment of the ruling power to his own people in his Province, and was thus able to evoke an affection and a loyalty such as few rulers before or after have been able to call forth from their subjects. It would have rejoiced his heart to have known that within the short space of five years, after a crisis that shook the loyalty of India to its foundations, not only one Province, but the whole of India would have a personal embodiment of the ruling power in the benign personality of the Great Queen.

This sketch of a unique personality may be brought to a fitting conclusion with the eulogy of Sir Richard Temple, his biographer, than which no more noble eulogy could have been penned. 'The lamented Laureate, Tennyson, just before his death, wrote a short poem entitled "Akbar's Dream". He dreams that his successors are loosening, stone by stone, the fair fabric which he had reared, and in which dwelt Truth and Peace, and Love and Justice; yet again he dreams and sees that:—

From out the sunset poured an alien race
Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,
Peace, Love, and Justice came and dwelt therein.

Now the spirit of Akbar's sway in these Provinces, though suppressed by long misrule, did still survive to be awakened into a purer life by British power in the hands of several administrators, among whom Thomason was the foremost. Thus the vision, which the English poet attributes to Abkar, does exactly represent the future that was destined to be realized under Thomason and his brethren.'

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE LAST LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES UNDER THE COMPANY

### John Russell Colvin, 1807–1857.

Colvin's father had originally been in the Royal Navy, but he had left the service to join a brother who was in business in Calcutta. It was here that Colvin was born. He was sent to Scotland to be educated at the University of St. Andrews. Scottish Universities at this time corresponded very much to what are now known as High Schools, the only difference being that the students were magnificently arrayed in scarlet gowns and caps. He left the University at the early age of fourteen, with this encomium from his mathematical master: 'During my experience as a professor, I have but rarely witnessed so much strength as well as quickness of talent, and so much proficiency exhibited by a person so young.'

As he was intended for an Indian writership, he was next sent to a private tutor in London for two years, and thence to Haileybury, the East India College near London. Writing in later years he throws some light on the life led by the students of his day at Haileybury, which shows that it was a life not unlike that often led at the older Universities of Oxford and Cambridge: 'I was a man of many acquaintances, and of somewhat gadding and social habits: all my work being done at night. You may do a good deal at the same time if you set yourself to it steadily.' As with many a man at the University, so with Colvin at Haileybury, his social habits did not prevent him from distinguishing himself in the Schools. He passed out of Haileybury after the usual course, carrying off the honours of the year in classics and mathematics.

He was now eighteen, and he duly proceeded to India in the early part of 1826. A college had been established in Calcutta on a less magnificent scale than that originally

devised by the Marquis Wellesley some years before, and Colvin was sent to this on his first arrival in India, and soon distinguished himself in the acquisition of Persian.

Some two years after Colvin's arrival in India, Lord William Bentinck came out as Governor-General. The period of his administration coincided with a time of more or less profound peace in the country; this allowed of attention being paid to important questions of internal administration, all of which had the welfare of the people in view. Education, and the opening out of avenues for the employment of the people in the higher and more responsible grades of the public service, as well as their adequate remuneration, were some of the more important of these questions, in all of which Colvin was destined to take his part, but only after he had himself gone through such a course of training in his own duties as should fit him for more responsible positions hereafter.

His first appointment was that of assistant to the Registrar of the Sadr Adalat, or the Company's Chief Court of Civil Appeal. The Registrar at the time was Mr., afterwards Sir William, Macnaghten, whose fate it was to be assassinated while holding the post of Resident at the court of Kabul, during the trouble that occurred at the time of the first Afghan War. This appointment necessitated much drudgery and hard work in summarizing the proceedings of which the record of appeal cases in the Company's Chief Court was composed. One special advantage of this labour was the familiarity it gave him with the vernacular, at all times an inestimable advantage to a man who has to work among the people of the country. Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in an address he delivered not very long ago at a meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, commented on a tendency he had observed among the younger generation of civilians to neglect the study of the vernacular on the ground that the Native gentlemen with whom they work on district and municipal boards prefer that the work should be done in English. This may be so, and undoubtedly is the case with the great majority of the Native members of these Councils, but the young officer should remember that there is a minority, and that this minority is by no means the least influential

among the community. Even though they cannot express their ideas in English, their opinions will often be found a truer index to the general opinion of the people on any subject than those of English-speaking gentlemen, however fluently they may be expressed in English; and in the minority will, as a rule, be found Muhammadan gentlemen. The writer of this sketch had the honour of presiding over such Councils for some ten years, and he often had occasion to pull up the secretary and insist on his substituting the vernacular for English in order to enable the Muhammadan gentlemen on the Council to follow the proceedings intelligently. He has a vivid recollection of the resentment these gentlemen often displayed when the secretary failed to remember his instructions to use the vernacular. While holding this appointment of Registrar, Colvin married.

His next appointment was that of assistant to the Judge of Cuttack, in Orissa, a Mr. Ricketts, who was afterwards better known as Sir Henry Ricketts. Speaking in later years, Sir Henry thus referred to his reminiscences of the first appearance of his young assistant: 'It is thirty years ago that a fair, handsome young fellow, full of life, and full of ability, came and joined me as my assistant in Cuttack, and we lived very happily together. We had boy judges then, as well as boy magistrates.' Colvin was only twenty at the time, but he was to show, as those whom he had taken as his great exemplars, Munro, Elphinstone, Malcolm, and Metcalfe, had already shown, and as his own contemporary, James Thomason, was to show, that youth need be no bar to a most successful career in the public service, given the possession of the necessary qualities, enthusiasm, zeal, and a high sense of responsibility. Colvin was especially fortunate in having a man like Ricketts as his chief in his first employment in a country district. The early impressions of Indian life which he thus received under such good auspices were destined never to be effaced from his mind. His biographer records how he then began to study the character of the people among whom his life was to be passed, to gain some insight into their points of view, and to acquire sympathy with them in their trials and struggles. No town appointment could have done this for him. The real life of the people of a great agricultural country like India is

to be seen at its best only in the country. This period of Colvin's career proved also of great advantage to him in other ways, and not least in the experience it gave him of many of the intricate problems of Indian administration.

His next appointment was a political one, and took him to a different scene, and to somewhat different work. He went to Haidarabad as second assistant to the Resident at the court of the Nizam. His life amongst the peasantry of Orissa had been a good preparation, for his work even in his new sphere took him a great deal into the country districts. He was called on to assist the officers of the Nizam in the task of assessing land revenue. Just as he had done in British territory, in Orissa, so also in Haidarabad he moved freely about among the cultivating classes whom he always styled his ' cronies '. In the course of his work he found that the old common village responsibility for payment of land revenue had been destroyed and the village head-men put aside. This common responsibility was the great feature of the village communities which existed in so many parts of India. Colvin thought that many of the difficulties in collecting the land revenue for the State had been mainly due to the destruction of this ancient system, and he suggested a return to the system of settlement with these communities, making each village community as a whole responsible for the payment of the land revenue, and restoring the authority of the head-men of the villages. His suggestions were adopted and a similar system was afterwards established in those parts of the North-West Provinces where such village communities were a special feature, and also in the Punjab after it became a British Province. He thus gave proof of the firm grasp he had of the first principles of Revenue administration, and of his general soundness of judgement. He had his reward in the increased confidence of the Government, and he was next entrusted with the very delicate mission of inquiring into certain alleged malpractices of the Resident's Mir Munshi, or confidential clerk. His inquiry proved the charges, and the Munshi was summarily dismissed. With the accession of a new Nizam at Haidarabad, his appointment came to an end.

Colvin was next appointed as an assistant in the Revenue

and Judicial Department. Here his immediate superior was Mr. James Thomason, whom, at a later date, he was destined to succeed as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces. While holding this appointment he was deputed to hold another delicate inquiry. A great religious movement had been inaugurated some ten years before by one Sayyid Ahmad, a member of the great Muhammadan community. It had passed practically unheeded by the British authorities. A man of the cultivating class, known among his fellows as Titu Mian, and to the British authorities as Mir Nisar Ali, had recently left his occupation and become a wrestler and a mighty man of the staff, or, as he would be called in India, a lathial; as such he had taken service with a large landed proprietor. In the course of his occupation, as is not uncommonly the case with men of his profession, he had made the acquaintance of the inside of a British jail. Later on, with the object of gaining sanctity and, what necessarily followed, greater influence amongst his fellows, he had made the Haj, as the pilgrimage to Mecca is styled, and so had become a Hajji. At Mecca he had made the acquaintance of the Sayyid, who had made a disciple of him, and had commissioned him to preach the Wahabi tenets, as the doctrines of this new religious movement were called in India. He had been in the custom of doing so in the districts to the north and east of Calcutta. He made many disciples among those who listened to his preaching, not altogether without having recourse to other methods of persuasion than the tongue; and, as might have been expected of a man of his professional skill, he understood the art of forcible conversion. Some of the great landed proprietors began to hear of the movement from their tenants, who were being subjected to these forcible methods of conversion. One of their number, a Hindu landowner, named Kishen Lal Roy, thought it a good opportunity of increasing his rent-roll, and he proceeded to levy a tax upon all those of his tenants who were of the new persuasion. The Hindu inspector of police got wind of the matter, but at an interview he had with the landowner they came to terms, and the inspector duly went on his way, doubtless not without some substantial consideration having reached his hands as the price of his silence. There-

upon the Wahabis, who had been resenting the new tax, preferred a complaint before the magistrate; he allowed the case to drag on, till the men began to lose patience, and determined to interview the Commissioner, to see whether they could not get redress; he was absent from head quarters on tour. In despair they determined to take the law into their own hands, and to adopt their own methods of reprisals, such as for centuries Muhammadans have put in force when at war with their Hindu brethren: they killed the animal held most sacred among the Hindus, and defiled a Hindu temple with its blood. Soon after a Brahman was killed, and when the Hindus began for their part also to take the law into their own hands, another Brahman was killed. The Commissioner appeared on the scene with a body of police but was worsted in the encounter that ensued. Troops had then to be dispatched against Titu Mian and his followers, and some fifty of them were killed —thus in Muhammadan opinion achieving martyrdom. Colvin was deputed to hold an inquiry into the cause of the outbreak. As the result of his investigations, he found that it was mainly owing to the want of tact and attention on the part of the local officials that what had been a justifiable cause of complaint against extortion on the part of a powerful landholder, who had been backed up by a corrupt inspector of police, had ended in an insurrection against all authority and in bloodshed. It was this case as much as anything that led Colvin in later years, when he had himself attained to responsible powers of government, to turn his attention to the direction in which administrative remedies might be found for such evils as he had witnessed the effects of. He used all his influence to secure a better class of Native tribunals by improving the status and emoluments of Native judges; and further he engaged on a large scheme for the reform of provincial police.

His next appointment was that of deputy-secretary in the department in which he was already an assistant. He eventually rose to the position of secretary of the Land Revenue Board. The acquaintance with the routine of a great central office which he thus acquired was of great use to him: it gave him familiarity with the principles that underlie the conduct of affairs, and acquaintance with

the views of men of experience and ability from all parts of India. But secretarial work alone does not suffice for one who is destined to become the Ruler of a great Province, and herein Colvin, perhaps, was less fortunate than his great contemporary Thomason, in that, unlike Thomason, he never had executive charge of a large district. His new appointment kept him in the congenial atmosphere of what was then the head quarters of the Government, Calcutta. It was during this period of his career that he made the acquaintance of Lord Macaulay. The Government had recently appointed a Committee of Public Instruction, a subject in which Colvin himself was deeply interested, to decide the question whether the higher education of the people was to be carried on through the medium of English or of the Oriental classics of Sanskrit and Arabic. Lord Macaulay's great minute finally settled the question in favour of English. The late Sir John Strachey has not been alone in his opinion that Lord Macaulay showed but scant consideration for the value of the great Eastern literatures as educational media. At the same time, history seems to show that the general policy of thus making English the medium of all higher education in India was a right one for the Government to adopt. But it is a question whether the system followed has at all times been one to commend itself entirely either to the Government or to educationalists. The various Education Commissions that have been appointed, and notably that appointed under the régime of the late Viceroy, who looked at the whole question, not only from the point of view of a statesman, but also from that of an educationalist, go to show that this is a recognized fact. In one direction, at any rate, the system as pursued in the earlier days of the educational movement seems to have been followed by more successful results than later developments of the system. The writer of this sketch, during his long career in India, has been privileged to have among his intimate friends, not only Indian noblemen and gentlemen trained under the earlier system, but also those trained under later methods, and for a mastery of the living language he must give the palm to the former, while not denying a mastery over the written word to the later generation. It is possible that the secret of this may

be found in the earlier generation of teachers regarding a mastery of the language they were called on to teach, and of the ideas and thoughts conveyed by that language, as of higher educational value than the methods of comparative criticism so largely adopted by their successors.

Upon Lord Auckland being appointed Governor-General, he had consulted all those who were acquainted with the rising men in India to give him lists of those whom they thought best qualified to fill the office of his private secretary. Many names appeared in one or other list, but Colvin's name appeared in all. Lord Auckland, after asking for an interview, offered the appointment to him, and Colvin promptly accepted. He knew the penalty that attached to such an office, how it would necessitate a veil of reserve between himself and his most intimate friends. The great English poet, Tennyson, has thus sung :—

> Not to Silence would I build
> A temple in her naked field :
> Not to her would raise a shrine :
> She no goddess is of mine.
> But to one of finer sense,
> Her half-sister, Reticence.

For a private secretary to a Governor-General, however, Silence and not Reticence, must be his goddess. Whatever the confidences exchanged between him and his chief, none can pass to the outer world. For six years Colvin's life was to be devoted to this chief ; and his biographer has recorded how he threw himself into his new duties with all the vigour of his character, and with the whole strength of his capacity ; he had exceptional powers of work, and he taxed them to the utmost. Some writers have laid it to the charge of Colvin that by his strength of character, his force of will, and his powerful mind, he established too great an ascendancy over Lord Auckland, and yet these same writers, as his biographer shows, would deny to him the possession of these very qualities some twenty years later, when a crisis had to be met which demanded their display. Not so, however, have those most competent to decide judged him. Their more kindly and truer estimate is the one accepted in this sketch. A student of human nature,

moreover, would argue that a long career in a position of authority would not tend to the weakening of masterly qualities exhibited at an earlier age, but on the contrary to their being intensified and strengthened. A law of nature cannot be so easily broken, and if the Roman poet's maxim, 'Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret,' is true of evil qualities, it is equally true of good and manly characteristics.

The work Colvin had now entered upon was to be of an exceptionally hard character. A recent Viceroy of India has spoken of Indian official life as 'an inconceivable grind', and that grind is felt by no one more than by the Governor-General's private secretary; and by no one, says his biographer, has it ever been discharged with more unfailing punctuality than by Colvin. Since Lord Auckland's time the duties may have changed somewhat in character, owing to the greater correspondence with London: constant telegrams from all quarters have to be received and replied to; a weekly mail from England has to be mastered, and a weekly mail to England dispatched. But though the duties may have changed, the burden is much the same. In Lord Auckland's time the Governor-General, besides having the whole work of the Government of India under his personal cognizance, was also responsible for the Government of Bengal. All patronage, moreover, was in his hands, and every civilian was held to have the right to see the Governor-General, should he so desire it, once a week. One of his friends has given a picture of Colvin at this stage of his career: 'Through six years he was the channel of approach to the Governor-General. It was through him that favours were won, and that frowns descended. I have heard some who came away from his presence complain that when he bowed, he did not bow low enough, and some that he held his head a little too high. But I never heard any one complain that he had been beguiled with honied words, or with promises that were not to be performed. I never heard any one impugn his honour, his fairness, his integrity, his resolution to do what was right and just in every case, and under all circumstances.'

Towards the close of the year 1837 Colvin accompanied Lord Auckland on one of his tours up country. No steamers

were yet running, and the Viceregal party travelled, as was then usual, by boat. The subject of steam communication between India and England by way of Egypt had been recently receiving the attention of Government. Lieutenant Waghorn, who was originally in the Royal Navy for a short period, and had afterwards joined the Company's service, first as a pilot, and then in the Company's Flotilla, had been only recently deputed to see what could be done in this direction. He was the pioneer in this movement. He received the rank of Lieutenant in the Royal Navy for his services. The story of his inauguration of the Overland Route, like so many of the stories of early adventure in the East, reads like a romance. He had been originally permitted to make a test voyage in 1829 ; he had undertaken to carry dispatches to and from Bombay to England within three months. He had expected to find a steamer at Suez to take him to Bombay, but none awaited him. He thereupon went from Suez to Jeddah in an open boat with a mutinous crew, and thence by a Company's ship to Bombay. He succeeded, notwithstanding, in his attempt. In order to arrange for a safe service of caravans across the desert from Cairo to Suez, he lived among the Arabs for months, associating familiarly with them, and living in their tents. He thus convinced them of the advantages of peaceful trade, and by 1841 he had established a regular service of English carriages, vans, and horses, to carry mails and passengers safely across the desert. On the arrival of the Viceregal party at Delhi, the question of a visit to the representative of the Moguls came up. Lord Auckland found that he still kept up the semblance of a court, and insisted, moreover, on the observance of certain ceremonial, which it would have been derogatory for the representative of the paramount power to have observed. Lord Auckland therefore decided not to pay a visit to his court. His private secretary, however, waited on him out of respect for the great name he bore, though it was now only 'the shadow of a name'. The party visited the beautiful valley of the Doon, and the heights of Masuri that look down upon it, and finally reached Simla, which was their destination, early in 1838.

From the heights of Simla Lord Auckland surveyed, as it were in a figure, the dominions of the British in India : he

realized their defencelessness against any determined attempt made upon them from enemies in the west, chief amongst whom he placed the Russians. It was then that he conceived the idea of building up an invisible rampart against that possible aggression by means of a system of alliances to be formed with the great Asiatic States lying on the confines of these dominions, Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Sindh. Failing a peaceful solution he prepared himself for a vigorous forward policy. In his own words: 'A friendly power, and an intimate connexion in Afghanistan, a peaceful connexion with Lahore, and an established influence in Sindh were objects for which some hazards might well be run.' He made up his mind that if the Ruler of Afghanistan, Dost Mahomed, would not further his schemes of defence by joining the alliance, he must make way for some ruler who would prove more amenable. Such a man appeared to be at hand in the person of the exiled monarch, Shah Shuja. Dost Mahomed, as history has recorded, refused the alliance. It had always been his great ambition to recover Peshawar from the Sikhs, and he made its restoration the condition of alliance with the British. Peshawar was not Lord Auckland's to dispose of, even had he been willing to do so. It belonged to the Ruler of the Punjab, the great Sikh Maharaja, Ranjit Singh, and Lord Auckland had no intention of risking the loss of the friendship of that ruler by insisting on its restoration. He judged the friendship of Ranjit Singh to be of greater value than the goodwill of the Amir. A year before these events the Dost had made a determined effort to possess himself of the place by a sudden attack, but without success. Ranjit Singh had thus spoken of him in the quaint imagery of the East: 'His ear of sagacity is closed by the cotton of negligence,' and again, 'When it is of no avail to him he will bite the hand of sorrow with the teeth of repentance.' He had at the same time shown that he had no intention of changing his friendly attitude towards the British, by remarking, 'What the Governor-General whispers in my ear that will I do.' But Lord Auckland had no wish to put this attitude to so severe a test as would have been involved in a request that he would accede to the wishes of the Dost. It is no part of the scope of this sketch to deal with the events of

the war: they have been dealt with in a sketch of Lord Auckland's career: it is sufficient to say here that Lord Auckland was not the only person deceived as to the acceptability of Shah Shuja to the Afghans as their ruler; he had the testimony in his favour of a man who had had every opportunity of judging, Captain, afterwards Sir Alexander Burnes, his own envoy to the court of Kabul, although at first Burnes had been strongly prejudiced in favour of the Dost. And so the fiat went forth that Shah Shuja should replace Dost Mahomed on the throne of Kabul, and that he should be placed there by British bayonets. Dost Mahomed himself clinched the matter by his action in throwing himself into the arms of Russia. And another argument that weighed with Lord Auckland in his decision was the effect that this action of the Dost's was having on men's minds in India itself; as Colvin's biographer has recorded: 'There was a general feeling of uncertainty and unrest spreading throughout the country, which was being manifested in a variety of ways; in the Deccan, for instance, men were reported to be burying their jewels, their money, and their valuables in the ground. Men's minds were failing them for fear. In the village, in the bazaar, in the great man's reception-rooms, there was a pleasurable expectation that some novel excitement was about to be felt: it gave evidence of the eagerness with which events beyond the frontier were followed by the people of India.' The great incursions from the west have not been forgotten; the people of India have long memories, and it was not so many years back that an Afghan monarch had his court at Lahore. They still, therefore, had cause for dread of yet another invasion from the west. A writer in *The Spectator* has recently referred to such a contingency in terms that demand attention: 'We in this country think of the Amir as a small potentate, but with the plunder of the rich peninsula to offer as a reward to the adventurous, the Amir, if spurred by sudden ambition, or by fear of invasion, could attract to his standard a very large Muhammadan army, which our own Muhammadan subjects might reinforce, or might help us to crush, according to the temper of the hour.'

When Lord Auckland left Simla for Calcutta towards the end of 1838, Colvin accompanied him. On their journey

southward the Viceregal party visited Lahore and Amritsar. The life they led on their tour was largely a tent life, and though Colvin found it ordinarily enjoyable enough, he thought it too distracting for quiet study such as he delighted in, especially with all the claims of his official duties upon his time; he thus expressed his sentiments: 'It is impossible for a man of business to be a student in tents.' And naturally so; there are always a great many coming and going about a camp from morning to night; and this in the east, where so much importance is attached to the accessibility of Rulers, is an advantage rather than the opposite. He had intended taking furlough at the end of 1839, but as Lord Auckland could not spare him, he decided to remain on in office. He was in Calcutta when the news of the disasters in Afghanistan arrived. He felt deeply with Lord Auckland in his distress. Amid the general gloom he was himself cheered by a dinner given him by his fellow civilians in Calcutta on the eve of his departure from India on furlough, at which a warm tribute was given him of their regard and affection. Lord Auckland himself adopted the unusual course of recording a special minute, which he desired should be transmitted to the Court of Directors; and to Colvin himself he wrote in these terms: 'In the very few instances in which shades of difference have ever occurred between us, I can remember nothing but such a habit of manly frankness as could alone make counsel useful; and I can never forget how hardly, honourably, and how faithfully you have laboured for me. I bear a most grateful recollection of the infinite use which I have derived from these labours.'

Early in 1842, Lord Auckland embarked for England, and Colvin accompanied him. The historian, in recording the departure from India of the Governor-General, has thus written: 'He embarked with the universal acknowledgement that he had not left an enemy behind. The patience and dignity with which he had borne his misfortunes, his gentle temper, his kindly nature, his large hospitality, and his unassuming carriage had won him the hearts of all who had met him, and to those who greatly venture in the cause of Great Britain their countrymen in India forgive much.'

Colvin had not taken leave out of India for sixteen years, and this his first and last furlough was the only period of rest and leisure that he enjoyed during his lifetime; it extended over three years, but even then it seemed to him to pass all too quickly, as all holidays do. He spent most of it in England. But he did not fail to revisit the scenes of his boyhood, and it was characteristic of his kindly nature that he went out of his way to visit an old servant of an uncle of his; she amused him much by asking him, 'How is your wife, Master John, she 's na black, is she, Sir?' It is curious, this not uncommon characteristic of the poorer classes to think a long contact with the East changes not only a man's character, but sometimes even his countenance, to an approximation to the people he has been living amongst. The writer had an amusing experience of this in his own person; he had been asked to give an address on India at a Board School: as he entered he heard the remark, 'Here comes the black man.'

On his return to India, Colvin was appointed Resident at the court of Nepal; his immediate predecessor in office had been Henry Lawrence, who had advised him that the more the Raja and the Darbar were left to themselves the better. 'My system,' he had said to Colvin, 'was two visits a year, and half a dozen letters to Government.' The life did not suit him any more than it did his predecessor; they were neither of them adapted for the rôle of 'a roi fainéant'. Having been attacked with a severe bout of malarial fever, he went down to Calcutta for change of air, and did not return to Nepal.

His next appointment, which was partly an executive and partly a judicial one, was that of Commissioner of the Tenasserim Province in Burmah. In this capacity he was called upon to settle an important forest question. Timber merchants, interested in the famous teak forests of those parts, formed the bulk of the local residents. He found that the licences given to cut timber were being much abused, and there was a growing danger of complete disafforestation. Arboriculture is a subject that has always been given a high place by the Government of India, not only for its own intrinsic importance, but because of the traditions of the East, where the planting of trees has always

been regarded as a meritorious act in a Ruler. The teak forests of Burmah are of special value, and considering that it takes eighty years for a teak tree to come to maturity as a marketable commodity, Government cannot view with indifference any approach to disafforestation. Colvin, having posterity in view, suggested the establishment of young plantations ; this suggestion and others that he made in connexion with leases and Government reserves, were accepted. The experience he gained by his judicial work was of much service to him, when the time came for him to take up his next appointment.

Lord Dalhousie was now Governor-General, and at the close of 1848 he summoned Colvin to Calcutta to take his seat on the Bench of the Company's Chief Court of Appeal. Colvin's biographer states that some surprise was expressed by the Bengal public at the appointment, but Lord Dalhousie was a man who seldom made a mistake in the selection of his agents, and Colvin fully justified his appointment. Though, when he first took his seat on the Bench, he brought with him little experience of law beyond what he had gained in Burmah, before he left it he had come to be regarded as the chief authority on law; so much so that 'it was commonly said that the pleaders practising in his court had sometimes to be reminded that they ought to address the court and not Mr. Colvin'. He resided during this period at Hastings House, the stately residence that has now, by the action of the late Viceroy, been reserved exclusively for housing the great Princes who periodically come as guests of Government to Calcutta.

Towards the close of the year 1853, the Government of the North-West Provinces had become vacant by the death of Mr. James Thomason, and Lord Dalhousie chose Mr. Colvin to succeed him. The appointment met with general approval. One of the leading newspapers thus voiced the opinion of all : 'Mr. Colvin will meet those whose actions he goes to direct, bearing with him the seal of the admiration of his former associates in Calcutta.' He had seen a good deal of the Province he was now called on to rule while he had been with Lord Auckland on his tours in 1838 and 1839, and as Lord Auckland had himself for a time administered it, during the temporary absence of its then Ruler on deputa-

tion, Mr. Colvin had had special opportunities of becoming acquainted with the circumstances and the needs of its people, and had got to know many of the leading officers: this knowledge was of use to him when he himself took up the reins of its government. The charge was an extensive one, consisting, as it did, of fifty-one districts, with an area of some 120,000 square miles, and a population of some thirty-five millions; the Revenue was about £6,000,000. There was a Chief Court of Appeal for judicial matters and a Revenue Board for the administration of Land Revenue affairs. Three and a half years of undisturbed rule fell to the lot of Mr. Colvin before the great crisis of the Mutiny temporarily put a stop to the beneficent work of peaceful administration. He directed his attention especially during this period towards an improvement in the judiciary, reforms in the police, and the resettlement of the Land Revenue. His first task was to strengthen the judicial department, to raise the status of the lowest class of Native civil judges, and to secure the better training of men to fill subordinate judicial posts. His object in all this was to secure that men in whose hands was placed the only check on the executive should be men, who, by efficiency and character, were capable of winning the confidence of the executive and of the people generally. He also exerted himself to raise the tone and standard of the subordinate grades of the police; he was the first to establish character books for the several members of the police force, a custom which has now become universal in all Government departments. He also established a special *Police Gazette*, in which news of heinous crimes was quickly disseminated throughout the Province. His great object was to promote a feeling of solidarity and of community amongst all the members of the force. In the department of Land Revenue, Mr. Colvin had to lay down rules for the new settlement of thirty years that was about to be undertaken, as the last settlement, which had also been for thirty years, was coming to an end. The State being in theory the landlord, a share in the produce of the soil becomes its due; it was Mr. Colvin's business to see that the share to be taken by the State was fair and equitable. In this he followed the principles that had actuated his

predecessor, that 'Prince of Land Revenue Administrators', Mr. James Thomason, and no better exemplar could he have taken as his guide. His policy met with success, and forms a basis for that of the present day. Other matters that claimed his attention were road communications, elementary and higher education, prison discipline, and indeed all matters belonging to an active internal administration. In those days the decentralization that is, to a modified extent, a feature of the present administration of the Government, was not thought of, and for even more or less trifling expenditure the sanction of the Court of Directors had to be obtained. Many changes have taken place since then, and the recent appointment of a Decentralization Commission seems to foreshadow others. Railway construction was only just commencing in India under the vigorous initiative of Lord Dalhousie. The East India Railway was in course of construction; Mr. Colvin advocated two other lines, which were to be constructed at a later date, the Oudh and Rohil-Khand, and the Bombay, Baroda, and Rajputana Railway. The main principles of Mr. Colvin's administration have been thus summed up by his biographer: 'The note of his administration was vigour: he consulted his officers a good deal, forming them for that purpose into little groups, like councils. One of them, Mr., afterwards Sir George Campbell, wrote thus of his chief: "I found him a very large-minded man, and it was a great pleasure to work with him." Others, and among them his secretaries, are said to have complained that he over-governed, but this was all part of the thoroughness that characterized him. The idle or the incompetent may have thought him a hard man. He left the widest discretion, and gave the most unflagging support to those whom he believed to deserve it. Impartial to the claims of all, easy of access, frank in personal address, courteous in correspondence, thoughtful for others, he soon gained the confidence of his subordinates in the new Province. His temperament was judicial; he liked to weigh, to examine, and to decide, not tardily, for he was prompt, but after due discussion. Though grave and rather stern in demeanour, his natural kindliness of disposition secured him the good-will of his officers.'

On a sudden this peaceful work of administration was

interrupted by that extraordinary outburst of Sepoy fanaticism, known in history as the Indian Mutiny. Fortunately for Mr. Colvin's peace of mind, his family had gone to Europe earlier in the year, and when the first news of the outbreak reached him, he was alone at Agra. This sketch will not deal with the events of the Mutiny; they have been dealt with in the first volume of this Series. What Mr. Colvin could do in the crisis he did do; and he received a telegram from Lord Canning thanking him sincerely for 'all that he had so admirably done, and for his stout heart'. That he could not do more was due to the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. His Province was in a very defenceless position, and the new Province of Oudh, described at this time as seething 'with suppressed rage, and ready to throw fresh fuel on any flame lit across its border', lay almost within the circle of the North-West Provinces. The only force he had at his disposal at Agra to make head against the mutineers, numbering several thousands, was a battery of six guns, with Native drivers, and some 655 raw recruits of a regiment of the Company's service. Naturally he was confined to a purely defensive position, and was never able to take the offensive, so important in dealing with Oriental races. It was the realization of his real powerlessness that at last broke his spirit, and had its effect in hastening his end. One of the many difficulties that confronted him, was how to render effective aid to the heads of districts, who constantly asked for it, to enable them to 'take arms against a sea of troubles, and, by opposing, end them'. The impossibility of doing this especially distressed him. The gallant conduct of one of these district officers, Mr. John Power, who succeeded in saving the treasure, the prisoners, and the records of his district, Mainpuri, was the one bright ray that shone through the gloom.

His great hope, as it was also the hope of his great contemporaries, John and Henry Lawrence, was in the speedy fall of Delhi, and when he found that delayed, he realized, as they had done, that the Mutiny would not be suppressed without a long and severe campaign. The policy that at this crisis commended itself to him, as it had also done to John Lawrence, was, 'to act at once, to reassure the

wavering, and to strike with effect against those in revolt.' Lord Canning practically set his seal to this policy in a letter he wrote to Mr. Colvin, which was to this effect : 'Menaces are unnecessary. Those for whom no severity could be too great are, every man in arms resisting the Commander-in-Chief, every man who has taken part in the murder of a British officer, or other person, every ringleader ; generally a distinction should be drawn between regiments that murdered their officers, and those that did not ; to men of the latter, forbearance in the first instance, and hope of pardon, if they can show a claim to it, may be extended.' Just before the receipt of this letter from the Governor-General, the only cavalry detachment he had at his disposal, from among the contingents of some of the Native States that had been lent him, mutinied and went off to join the rebels ; this was the Gwalior contingent. In the hope of checking this tendency to mutiny, Mr. Colvin issued a proclamation to the mutineers. Unfortunately, he had not first obtained the sanction of the Governor-General to its issue ; and the English translation of the text, as it reached Lord Canning, seemed to him to err on the side of leniency towards soldiers who had murdered their officers, and Lord Canning found himself compelled to disavow it. Subsequently, when the vernacular text, which alone would reach the Sepoys, was more carefully studied, it was discovered that it did not necessarily convey the construction that the English translation had allowed to be drawn from it ; and it was recognized that the criticism passed upon it had been unnecessarily harsh and severe. Moreover, the fact that Sir Henry Lawrence had practically adopted it for promulgation in his own Province seemed a complete justification for its issue by Mr. Colvin. Lord Canning had superseded it by one issued under his own authority ; but, as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other had any effect in restoring a single Sepoy to his allegiance. The Sepoys by this time recognized no authority but their own ; in the expressive language of the East, they were 'their own masters'. Official Oriental translators often find it difficult to render correctly the 'nuances' of a language ; and this is an additional argument in favour of all young English officials acquiring in the earlier years of their service, when

it can more easily be acquired, a complete mastery of one or othér of the Indian vernaculars.

During the early days of the troubles, Mr. Colvin was being continually pressed by the English community to seek the shelter of the fort; but his business was to show as resolute a front at head quarters as his district officers were showing in their districts, and he refused, until he was absolutely compelled, to seek for safety behind walls. For some two months his magistrate, a strong man on whom he could confidently rely, succeeded in maintaining order with his force of police. When a hostile force at length approached, then only were the women and children sent into the fort for safety, and to be out of the way; later on the rest of the civil community, who were non-combatants, followed; and finally, when the raw levies at the disposal of Mr. Colvin were beaten by a greatly superior force of the enemy in the suburbs of the city, orders were given them to enter the fort. Thereupon, the police, seeing the British forces defeated, promptly threw over all discipline, and dispersed. Then, and then only, did Mr. Colvin himself enter the fort, but he had to be carried in, prostrated by an attack of heat apoplexy. He was destined never again to leave it alive. In a letter he wrote at this time to John Lawrence, he laid bare the inner workings of his mind: 'If you ask my disease, it is the utter powerlessness, with such rotten agency as we have, of doing for the present any good.' The doctors in vain entreated him to give over charge of his office, if only temporarily, to others: he was told indeed that unless he did so, he must succumb. But he believed it his duty to retain his trust, and he sank gradually under the burden, one more example of that noble devotion to duty that has cost England the lives of so many of her noblest sons. His biographer has written thus of this time: 'Exhaustion, sleeplessness, an over-taxed mind, combined with the strain of his position, the grief which he suffered from the loss of his charge, and the death of so many about him, prepared him for the assaults of disease. Knowing what must be the inevitable end, he had written, some weeks before the actual end came, to an old friend in these terms: "I send my affectionate regards to all my old friends; I cannot shut my eyes to what is probably before

me. If I have erred in any step, hard has been my position, and you will bear lightly on my memory."'

At last the end came, and just as success was beginning to smile on the British arms in India. He passed away on September 9, 1857, only five days before the recapture of Delhi from the rebels, and a fortnight before the first gallant relief of the Residency at Lucknow. As a friend remarked, 'He gave up his life for his country, as much as if he had fallen, sword in hand, on the battle-field.'

At a public meeting held in his honour in Calcutta, one of the speakers paid this noble tribute to his memory: 'In him the loyal Natives of this country, the Government, and the Civil Service, have sustained a great and lasting loss; and among the many distinguished men whom that Service has produced, though some may have surpassed him in this or that element of distinction, no name will stand higher for unfailing constancy in the discharge of duty, for unswerving integrity, and desire to do right, for the bright example which he set in the land of a high-minded, upright, Christian English gentleman, pious but not bigoted, zealous but tolerant, firm but kind, just but merciful.'

The encomium passed on him by his biographer may well conclude this sketch: 'Mr. Colvin's service, like that of Mr. Thomason, had not been recognized by so-called honours. But to be one of the class to which Mr. Thomason and Mr. Colvin belonged is in itself a rare distinction. It is because of such men that British rule is acceptable to the people of India. Their lives and their labours are built into the length and breadth of its foundations. Unrecognized it may be, and little honoured in England, their names are yet household words in the greatest Province of her Empire. They illustrate in their persons the best traditions of the service, the worthiest ambition of the country to which they belong. For it is through such as they were that the people of India are convinced, among much that is dark and discouraging, of the good-will and honest purpose of their alien and unseen Rulers.'

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